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A
COLLECTION
OF
LETTERS,

Never before printed :

WRITTEN

By ALEXANDER POPE, Esq;

AND

Other ingenious GENTLEMEN,

To the Late

AARON HILL, Esq;



LONDON:

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M.DCC.LI.

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LETTERS

FROM

Several ingenious GENTLEMEN

To the Late

AARON HILL, Esq;

LETTER I.

From Mr. POPE, To AARON HILL, Esq;

Dear Sir,

THE little Thing which you take so kindly, is but a very small Part of what I owe you; and whatever my Studies, or (to use a properer Word) Idleness, are capable of producing, ought to be returned you in mere Gratitude for the Pleasure I have received from your own Writings: In which give me Leave to say, your good Will to me in particular, is as distinguishable, as the Obligation you lay on the Publick in general. I am very happy in the Envy and silly Attacks of such People, as have awakened the Generosity of so powerful a Defender. Nor am I ashamed of those Weaknesses of mine, which they have exposed in Print (the greatest of which was my thinking too candidly of them, to whom I wrote my

B Letters

Letters with so much unguarded Friendliness, and Freedom), since you have found a Way to turn those Weaknesses into Virtue, by your partial Regard of them. The Eye of Candour, like the Sun, makes all the Beauties which it sees; it gives Colour and Brightness to the meanest Objects purely by looking on them. I agree with you, that there is a Pleasure in seeing the Nature and Temper of Men in the plainest Undress; but few Men are of Consequence enough to deserve, or reward, that Curiosity. I shall indeed (and so will all Mankind) be highly pleased to see the Great Czar of *Muscovy* in this Light, drawn by himself, like an antient Master, in rough Strokes, without heightening, or shadowing: What a Satisfaction to behold that perfect Likeness, without Art, Affectation, or even the Gloss of Colouring, with a noble Neglect of all that Finishing and Smoothing, which any other Hand would have been obliged to bestow on so principal a Figure? I write this to a Man whose Judgment I am certain of, and therefore am as certain you will give the World this great Depositum, just as you have received it: There will be no Danger of your dressing this *Mars* too finely, whose Armour is not Gold, but Adamant, and whose Stile in all Probability is much more strong, than it is polish'd. I congratulate you, that this great Treasure is fallen into your Hands; and I congratulate all *Europe*, that it is to be delivered to them, through the Hands of one, who will think it Sacrilege to touch upon, much less to alter, any great Lines of such an Original.

I can make you no better Return for your great Compliment upon me (which it would be Arrogance in me to shew to any other, and dangerous even to remember myself) but by telling you, that it is Honour enough to reward all my Studies, to find my Character and Reputation is Part of the Care of that Person, to whom the Fame and Glory of *Peter Alexiowitz* was committed.

SIR,

SIR,

I am forced to make use of another Hand than my own in this Letter, having received a Wound cross all the Veins of my right Hand, by which the Tendons of two Fingers are separated ; however, it was a Fine paid for my Life, which has been very narrowly saved, and which may now continue me some Years longer,

Dear Sir,

*Your most faithful, affectionate,
and obliged Servant,*

A. POPE.

L E T T E R II.

From Mr. POPE, To AARON HILL, Esq;

S I R,

Jan. 5, 1730—1.

I WAS unwilling to answer your too obliging Letter (which puts much too great a Stress upon my Opinion) till I had read your Play with the Attention it deserves ; I mean, not once, but several times over. In a Word, to comply with my Judgment will cost you no Trouble, except to your Modesty ; which is, *to act it as soon as possible*. Nothing but Trifles have I to object, and which were such as did not once stop me at the first Reading ; the Spirit, Design, and Characters, carrying me on, without Stop, Check, or even Intermission. You certainly are Master of the Art of the Stage, in the manner of forming and conducting the Design, which I think impossible to be mended ; of that Great Part, and of the other, the raising the Passions, I will say nothing to you, who know them so much better than myself. I would only point out a few Particularities in Thought or Expression, as material as excepting to a Button on your Coat, or a loose Hair. Two or three Lines I have with great Timorousness written on one of your blank Leaves, in Black Lead, half afraid to

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be.

be legible, and not without some Hope that before you see them, they may be vanished : So may perhaps my Objections, every one of them. Shall I see you soon, to tell you these Nothings ? Whenever I shall see you, I hope to find, we can employ the Time better, than I, in telling, or you, in hearing them. Or must I return you the Play now ? Your Orders will be obey'd as soon as you give them.—I really rejoice at your Lady's Recovery : I would have her and you think, the Air of *Richmond* is particularly good to re-establish her. Pray let Miss *Hill* know, I am ready to believe all the good Things her own Father can see in her : I can safely trust both his *Judgments*, and his *Affections*. I am, truly,

S I R,

Your obliged and sincerely

affectionate Servant,

A. POPE.

LETTER III.

From Mr. POPE, To AARON HILL, Esq;

Dear Sir,

Feb. 5. 1730-1.

I MADE a strong Essay to have told you in Person how very kindly I took your two last Letters. The only Hours I had in my Power from a necessary Care that brought me back immediately, I would have imposed on you. It will please you to know the poor Woman is rather better, tho' it may be but like the Improvement of a Light on the End of a dying Taper, which brightens a little before it expires.—Your Hint about my Title *Of false Taste*, you'll see, is made use of in the Second Edition. Your Opinion also of my giving some publick Dissent or Protest against the silly malicious Misconstruction of the Town, I agree to ; but I think no one Step should be taken in it, but *in Concert* with the Duke whom they injure. It will be a Pleasure felt

felt by you, to tell you, his Grace has written to me the strongest Assurance imaginable of the Rectitude of his Opinion, and of his Resentment of that Report, which to *Him* is an *Impertinence*, to me a *Villainy*.

I am afraid of tiring you, and (what is your best Security) I have not Time to do it. I'll only just tell you, that many Circumstances you have heard, as Resemblances to the Picture of *Timon*, are utterly Inventions of Lyars; the Number of Servants never was an Hundred, the Paintings not of *Venio* or *La Guerre*, but *Bellucci* and *Zaman*; no such Buffet, Manner of Reception at the Study, Terras, &c. all which, and many more, they have not scrupled to forge, to gain some Credit to the Application: And (which is worse) belyed Testimonies of Noblemen, and of my particular Friends, to condemn me. In a word, the Malice is as great as the Dulness, of my Calumniators: The one I forgive, the other I pity, and I despise both. Adieu; the first Day I am near you I will find you out, and shew you something you will like. My best good Wishes are yours, and Miss *Urania's*.

Your affectionate Servant,

A. POPE.

LETTER IV.

From Mr. POPE, To AARON HILL, Esq;

S I R,

Parsons Green, Feb. 5. 1730.

SINCE I am fully satisfy'd we are each of us sincerely and affectionately Servants to the other, I desire we may be no further mis-led by the Warmth of writing on this Subject. If you think I have shewn too much *Weakness*, or if I think you have shewn too much *Warmth*, let us forgive one another's Temper. I told you I thought my Letter a silly one; but the more I thought so, the more in sending it I

B 3

shew'd

shew'd my Trust in your good Disposition toward me. I am sorry you took it to have an Air of *Neglect*, or *Superiority*: Because I know in my Heart, I had not the least Thought of being any way superior to Mr. *Hill*; and, far from the least Design to shew *Neglect* to a Gentleman who was shewing me Civility, I meant in Return to shew him a better Thing, Sincerity; which I'm sorry should be so ill express'd as to seem Rudeness. I meant but to complain as frankly as you, that all Complaints on both Sides might be out, and at a Period for ever: I meant by this to have laid a surer Foundation for your Opinion of me for the future, that it might no more be shaken by Mistakes or Whispers.

I am sure, Sir, you have a higher Opinion of my Poetry than I myself. But I am so desirous you should have a just one of me every way, that I wish you understood both my Temper in general, and my Justice to you in particular, better than I find my Letter represented them. I wish it the more, since you tell me how ill a Picture my Enemies take upon 'em to give, of the Mind of a Man they are utter Strangers to. However, you will observe, that much *Spleen* and *Emotion* are a little inconsistent with *Neglect*, and an Opinion of *Superiority*. Towards Them, God knows, I never felt any Emotions, but what bad Writers raise in all Men; those gentle ones of Laughter or Pity: That I was so open, concern'd, and serious, with respect to you only, is sure a Proof of Regard, not Neglect. For in Truth, nothing ever vex'd me, till I saw your Epigram against Dr. S. and me come out in their Papers: And this, indeed, did vex me, to see *One Swan among the Geese*.

That the Letters *A. H.* were apply'd to you in the Papers, I did not know (for I seldom read them); I heard it only from Mr. *Savage*, as from yourself, and sent my Assurances to the contrary. But I don't see how the Annotator on the *D.* could have rectify'd that

that Mistake, *publickly*, without particularizing *your Name*, in a Book where I thought it too good to be inserted. No doubt he has apply'd that Passage in the *D.* to you, by the Story he tells; but his Mention of *Bombast*, only in some of your *Juvenile Pieces*, I think, was meant to shew, that Passage hinted only at that *allegorical Muddiness*, and not at any *worse sort of Dirt*, with which some other Writers were charged. I hate to say what will not be believ'd: Yet when I told you, "Many ask'd me to *whom* that Oblique "Praise was meant?" I did not tell you I answer'd, it was *you*. Has it escap'd your Observation, that the Name is a Syllable too long? Or (if you will have it a Christian Name) is there any other in the whole Book? Is there no Author of two Syllables whom it will better fit, not only as getting out of the allegorical Muddiness, but as *having been dipt in the Dirt of Party-writing*, and recovering from it betimes? I know such a Man, who would take it for a Compliment, and so would his Patrons too—But I ask you not to believe this, except you are vastly inclin'd to it. I will come closer to the Point: Would you have the Note *left out*? It shall. Would you have it expressly said, *you were not meant*? It shall, if I have any Influence on the Editors.

I believe the Note was meant only as a gentle Rebuke, and friendly: I understood very well the *Caveat* on your Part to be the same; and complain'd (you see) of nothing but two or three Lines reflecting on my *Behaviour* and *Temper to other Writers*; because I knew they were not true, and you could not know they were.

You cannot in your cool Judgment think it fair to fix a Man's Character on a Point, of which you do not give one Instance? Name but the Man, or Men, to whom I have unjustly omitted Approbation or Encouragement, and I'll be ready to do them Justice. I think

think I have *publickly* prais'd all the best Writers of my Time, except yourself, and such as I have had no fair Opportunity to praise. As to the *Great* and *Popular*, I've prais'd but few, and those at the Times when they were *least popular*. Many of those Writers have done nothing else but flatter'd the Great and Popular, or been worse employ'd by 'em in Party-stuff. I do indeed think it *no great Pride* in me, to speak about *them* with some Air of Superiority; and this, Sir, must be the Cause (and no other) that made me address *that Declaration* of my Temper towards *them*, to *you*, who had accus'd me of the contrary; not, I assure you, from the least Imagination of any Resemblance between you and them, either in Merit or Circumstances.

I nam'd Mr. *Dennis*, because you distinguish him from the rest: So do I. But, moreover, he was uppermost in my Thoughts, from having endeavour'd (*before* your Admonition) to promote his Affair, with Lord *Wilmington*, Lord *Lansdown*, Lord *Blandford*, and Mr. *Pulteney*, &c. who promis'd me to favour it. But it would be unjust to measure my Good-will by the Effects of it on the Great, many of whom are the last Men in the World who will pay Tributes of this sort, from their own un-giving Nature; and many of whom laugh at me when I seriously petition for Mr. *Dennis*. After this, I must not name the many whom I have fruitlessly sollicit'd: I hope yet to be more successful. But, Sir, you seem too iniquitous in your Conceptions of me, when you fancy I call'd such Things *Services*. I call'd 'em but *humane Offices*: *Services* I said I *would* render him, *if I could*. I *would* ask a Place for Life for him; and I *have*; but that is not in my Power: If it was, it would be a *Service*, and I wish it.

I mention'd the *Possibility* of Mr. *D.*'s abusing me for forgiving him, because he actually did, in
Print,

Print, lately represent my poor, undesigning, Subscriptions to him, to be the Effect of Fear and Desire, to stop his Critiques upon me. I wish Mr. *Hill* would (for once) think so candidly of me, as to believe me sincere in one Declaration, that “ I desire no Man “ to belye his own Judgment in my Favour.” Therefore, tho’ I acknowledge your generous Offer to give *Examples of Imperfections* rather out of your own Works than mine, in your intended Book; I consent, with all my Heart, to your confining them to *mine*; for two Reasons: The one, that I fear your Sensibility that way is greater than my own (by observing you seem too concern’d at that Hint given by the Notes on the *D.* of a little Fault in the Works of your *Youth* only): The other is a better, namely, that I intend to amend by your Remarks, and correct the Faults you find, if they are such as I expect from Mr. *Hill*’s cool Judgment.

I am very sensible, that my *Poetical* Talent is all that may (I say not, will) make me *remember’d*: But it is my *Morality* only that must make me *Beloved*, or *Happy*: And if it be any Deviation from *Greatness of Mind*, to prefer Friendships to Fame, or the honest Enjoyments of Life to noisy Praises; I fairly confess that Meanness. Therefore it is, Sir, that I much more resent any Attempt against my moral Character (which I know to be unjust) than any to lessen my poetical one (which, for all I know, may be very just).

Pray then, Sir, excuse my weak Letter, as I do your warm one. I end as I begun. You guess’d right, that I was sick when I wrote it: Yours are very well written, but I have neither Health nor Time to make mine so. I have writ a whole Book of Retractions of my Writings (which would greatly improve your Criticisms on my Errors), but of my Life and Manners I do not yet repent one Jott, especially when I find in my Heart I continue to be, without the least Acrimony

mony (even as little as I desire you should bear to myself), sincerely, Sir,

Yours affectionately,

A. POPE.

If I did not acknowledge as I ought, both the Father's agreeable Present, and the Daughter's pretty one, which you sent me, I very ill express'd myself. If Miss *Urania Hill* has not my 4th Edition of the *Odyssey*, I beg your Leave to send it her. You had sooner heard from me, but I saw yours, here, but three Days ago. I return Home To-morrow.

LETTER V.

From Mr. POPE, To AARON HILL, Esq;

S I R,

Feb. 15. 1731.

EVER since I return'd Home, I have been in almost roaring Pain, with a violent Rheumatism in my Shoulder, so that all I am able to do is to return you Thanks for yours. The Satisfaction it gave me is proportion'd to the Regard I have for you. I will not praise your Poem further than to say, the Generosity of its Sentiments must charm every Man: Its other Merit you know well. You'll pardon the few Doubts I start in the Interlinings; they are such as you can efface as easily as they may deserve. I wish to tell my Lord *Peterborough* (who has so long honour'd me with so particular and familiar an Acquaintance) the Honour done him.

I am very desirous to leave out that *Note*, if you like so. The two Lords, and one Gentleman, who really took and printed that Edition, I can (I doubt not) bring easily to it.

The chief Objection I have to what you say of myself in this Poem, is, that the Praise is too strong. I may well compound for the rest.

Suffer

[II]

Suffer me to send the young Lady the *Odyssey*, full of Faults as I know it to be, before she grows old enough to know how mean a Present it is. I am, with great Truth,

S I R,

*Your most humble
obedient Servant,*

A. POPE.

LETTER VI.

From Mr. POPE, To AARON HILL, Esq;

S I R,

March 2. 1731.

I AM extremely pleas'd with the Favour you have done me in sending me your Poem, and the more, as it gives me the Opportunity of assuring you I never did, or meant you, the least Injury; in which I should have fully satisfy'd you long since, had you ask'd me the Question. I remember, Mr. *Lintot* shew'd me a Piece of yours, of which (he said) you desir'd my Opinion: I was just then in a great Hurry, going a Journey out of Town upon Business for a few Days; and therefore told him I would call for it in a Day or two, to read carefully: However, I cast my Eye on some Parts of it, which I lik'd, and told him so. This was all, to the best of my Memory, that pass'd between us; and you may imagine it was some Surprize to me when I saw your Preface a very short time after. I think it incumbent on any well-meaning Man, to acquit himself of an ill-grounded Suspicion in another, who perhaps means equally well, and is only too credulous. I am sincerely so far from resenting this Mistake, that I am more displeas'd, at your thinking it necessary to treat me so much in a Style of Compliment as you do in your Letter. I will say nothing of the Poem you favour me with, for fear of being in the wrong; but I am sure, the Per-

son who is capable of writing it, can need no Man to judge it. I am, with all Respect,

S I R,

Your most obedient

humble Servant,

A. POPE.

I receiv'd yours but four Days since, it being directed to *Chiswick*, where I have not liv'd this Twelvemonth.

L E T T E R VII.

From Mr. POPE, To AARON HILL, Esq;

Dear Sir,

Twickenham, March 14. 1731.

I AM not more happy, nor feel a greater Ease in comparison of my former Pain, in the Recovery from my Rheumatism, than in that from your Displeasure. Be assur'd, no little Offenders ever shall be distinguish'd more by me. Your Dedication pleases me almost equally with the Poem; our Hearts beat just together, in regard to Men of Power and Quality: But a Series of Infirmities (for my whole Life has been but one long Disease) has hinder'd me from following your Advices. I this Day have writ to Lord *Peterborough* a Letter with your Poem. The Familiarity in which we have liv'd some Years, makes it not unusual, in either him or me, to tell each other any thing that pleases us: Otherwise you might think it arrogant in me, to pretend to put so good a Thing into his Hands, in which I have no Merit. Your Mention of our Friend Mr. *Mallet* I thank you for, and should be glad he would give me an Opportunity of thanking you in Person, who am, with Sincerity,

S I R,

Your obliged, and

faithful Servant,

A. POPE.

L E T-

LETTER VIII.

From Mr. POPE, To AARON HILL, Esq;

Dear Sir,

Twickenham, April 4. 1731.

IT is a serious Pleasure to me to find you concern'd, that I should do your good Sense and Discernment the Justice it deserves. It is impossible for me not to think just what you would have me on this Head; the whole *Spirit* and *Meaning* of your Poem shews all little Thoughts to be Strangers to your Soul. I happen to know many Particulars relating to the Earl of *Peterborough's* Conduct, and just Glory, in that Scene you draw so well: But no Man ought (I think) to attempt what you hint at, or can pretend to do him more Honour than what you yourself here have done, except himself: I have long press'd him to put together many Papers lying by him, to that End. On this late Occasion he told me you had formerly endeavour'd the same, and it comes into my Mind, that, on many of those Papers, I've seen an Endorsement *A. H.* which I fancy might be those you overlook'd. My Lord spoke of you with great Regard, and told me how narrowly you both miss'd of going together on an adventurous Expedition*. The real Reason I carry'd him your Poem was, that I imagin'd you would never send it him, of all Mankind; and that I was truly pleas'd with it.

I am troubled to reflect, how unequal a Correspondent I am to you, partly thro' want of Health (for I have since had a Fever), partly thro' want of Spirits, and want of Solitude; for the last Thing we Poets care to own, is the other Want; that of Abilities.

But I am sensibly pleas'd with your Letter, not only with that which seem'd to prompt it, but with the Things said in it: And I thank you for both—Believe me desirous to see you: When, and where,

C

you

* On an Expedition to the *West Indies*.

you shall determine; tho' I wish it were here:
 You'll see a Place seeming more fit for me than it is;
 looking Poetical, yet too much in the World; Ro-
 mantic, and not Retir'd: However, I can lock up
 all Avenues to it sometimes, and I know no better
 Reason for doing so, or for shutting out the World,
 than to enjoy such an one as yourself.

I am, Sir, with Esteem and Sincerity,

Your most obedient

faithful Servant,

A. POPE.

LETTER IX.

From Mr. POPE, To AARON HILL, Esq;

Dear Sir,

August 30. 1731.

THE very Moment I receive yours, I dispatch
 this, to tell you with Sincerity both my
 Guest's and my own Concern to have no Hopes of
 seeing you; as well as, what is unfeignedly a yet
 greater Concern, our Sorrow at what you express to
 be the Occasion of it. He wishes, now, for Power,
 for no other Reason, than to be able to elevate Merit
 above that Fortune it commonly finds, from Power.
 And I can truly add, for my own Part, who never
 tasted Power, that I never felt any Uneasiness in a
 low Fortune, but that which it causes when I find it
 cannot prove the Regard and Love I bear to true
 Worth in any afflictive Circumstance.

Excuse my pretending to say a Word on that Sub-
 ject; all I meant to say (but the Overflowings of my
 Heart vented thus much) was, to beg you to think
 too favourably of us both, to imagine we should not
 be unhappy as much as dissatisfy'd, if we did not read
 once or twice more your Tragedy, after what you
 tell us of your having alter'd it on our Suggestions.
 We have a conscientious Fear, that you may have
 comply'd too implicitly with those *Marks*, rather of
 our

our scrupulous Sincerity, than of any certain Judgment; and have quench'd sometimes a Flame we admire, tho' we may fear; or sometimes heighten'd what may be natural, tho' we might think it low. Pray ease us, by favouring us with a second View of it.

And whenever you send me that Essay, you may be assur'd of my sincere Answer; tho' upon that Head I could rather wish it were given you personally. I hope a little Time will bring us together. Know me, most affectionately, dear Sir,

Yours,

A. POPE.

LETTER X.

From Mr. POPE, To AARON HILL, Esq;

Sept. 1. 1731.

I COULD not persuade myself to write to you since your great Loss, till I hop'd you had receiv'd some Alleviation to it, from the only Hand which can give any, that of Time. Not to have mention'd it, however fashionable it may be, I think unnatural, and in some Sense inhuman; and I fear the contrary Custom is too much an Excuse, in reality, for that Indifference we too usually have for the Concern of another: In truth, that was not my Case: I know the Reason of one Man is of little Effect toward the Resignation of another; and when I compar'd the Forces of yours and mine, I doubted not which had the Advantage, even tho' in your own Concern. 'Tis hard, that in these tender Afflictions the Greatness of the Mind and the Goodness are opposite to each other; and that while Reason, and the Consideration upon what Conditions we receive all the Goods of this Life, operate towards our Quiet; even the best of our Passions (which are the same Things with the softest of our Virtues) refuse us that

Comfort. But I'll say no more on this melancholy Subject. The whole Intent of this Letter is to tell you how much I wish you capable of Consolation, and how much I wish to know when you find yourself so. I would hope you begin to seek it, to amuse your Mind with those Studies of which *Tully* says, *Adversis perfugium & solatium præbent*, and to transcribe (if I may so express it) your own Softnesses and generous Passions into the Hearts of others who more want them. I do not flatter you in saying, I think your Tragedy will do this effectually (to which I had Occasion, the other Day, to do Justice to Mr. *Wilks*), or whatever else you chuse to divert your own Passion with, and to raise that of your Readers.—I wish the Change of Place, or the Views of Nature in the Country, made a Part of your Scheme.—You once thought of *Richmond*—I wish you were there, or nearer. I have thrice miss'd of you in Town, the only Times I have been there: My last Month was pass'd at my Lord *Cobham's*, and in a Journey thro' *Oxfordshire*: I wish you as susceptible, at this Time, of these Pleasures as I am. I have been truly concern'd for you, and for your Daughter, who I believe is a true Part of you. I will trouble you no farther, but with the Assurance that I am not unmindfully,

S I R,

Your most sincere

humble Servant;

A. POPE.

LETTER XI.

From Mr. POPE, To AARON HILL, Esq;

Dear Sir,

Sept. 3. 1731.

I HAVE been, and yet am, totally confin'd by my Mother's Relapse, if that can be call'd so, which is rather a constant and regular Decay. She is now on her last Bed, in all Probability, from whence she

she has not risen in some Weeks, yet in no direct Pain, but a perpetual Languor. I suffer for her, for myself, and for you, in the Reflection of what you have felt at the Side of a sick Bed which I now feel, and of what I probably soon shall suffer which you now suffer, in the Loss of one's best Friend. I have wish'd (ever since I saw your Letter) to ask you, since you find your own House a Scene of Sorrows, to pass some Days in mine; which I begin to think I shall soon have the same melancholy Reason to shun. In the mean time, I make a sort of Amusement of this melancholy Situation itself, and try to derive a Comfort in imagining I give some to her. I am seldom prompted to Poetry in these Circumstances; yet I'll send you a few Lines I sent t'other Day from her Bed-side to a particular Friend. Indeed I want Spirits and Matter, to send you any thing else, or on any other Subject. These too are spirit-less, and incorrect.

*While ev'ry Joy, successful Youth! is thine,
Be no unpleasing Melancholy mine.
Me long, ah long! may these soft Cares engage;
To rock the Cradle of reposing Age,
With lenient Arts prolong a Parent's Breath,
Make Languor smile, and smooth the Bed of Death:
Me, when the Cares my better Years have shown
Another's Age, shall hasten on my own;
Shall some kind Hand, like B***'s or thine,
Lead gently down, and favour the Decline?
In Wants, in Sickness, shall a Friend be nigh,
Explore my Thought, and watch my asking Eye?
Whether that Blessing be deny'd, or giv'n,
Thus far, is right; the rest belongs to Heav'n.*

Excuse this, in a Man who is weak and wounded, but not by his Enemies, but for his Friends. I wish you the Continuance of all that is yet dear to you in Life, and am truly

Yours,

A. POPE.
L E T.

LETTER XII.

*From Mr. POPE, To AARON HILL, Esq;**S I R,**Twickenham, Sept. 25. 1731.*

THE Hurry I was in to send to you, made it a Message instead of a Letter, which I ask your Excuse for by this. If now you have Thoughts of the Country, pray think no further than my own House: I am wholly at your Service. The Weather is yet inviting: I could wish (if Miss Hill, under a Father's Authority, might venture), she saw me before I am quite decay'd (I mean all of me that is yet half flourishing, my Garden). You'll very much oblige me, and give Countenance to my Judgment, in letting your Tragedy pass thro' my Hands to any Persons to whom you care I should shew it. Believe me with great Truth (and a real Concern for what must so much afflict a good Mind),

*S I R,**Your affectionate**obedient Servant,**A. POPE.*

LETTER XIII.

*From Mr. POPE, To AARON HILL, Esq;**Dear Sir,**Sept. 29. 1731.*

I Return you the Inclos'd the Day after I receiv'd it, lest it should retard your finishing the Copy, now the Year draws toward Winter: And tho' I am in a great Hurry, which allows me to say little, only to tell you, in my Lord's Name and my own, that we think you shew even more Friendship and Confidence in us, than we have hitherto been justly intitled to, from any Use our Opinion could be of, to a Judgment so good as your own. We are fully satisfy'd; and 'tis but at a Word or two, that I can carp, with

with the utmost and most extended Severity of a Friend. It will be with infinitely greater Promptitude, and Pleasure, that I shall speak (every-where) my real Approbation and Esteem of the Performance, in which I shall do no more than discharge my Conscience. I wish sincerely, I could as well serve you in promoting its Success, as I can testify it deserves all Success. You will, I am sure, be so candid, and so reasonable, as to conclude, I would not decline writing your Epilogue on any but a just Reason, and indeed (to me) an invariable Maxim, which I have held these Twenty Years. Every poetical Friend I have, has had my Word, I never would; and my Leave to take the same Refusals I made him, ill, if ever I wrote one for another: And this very Winter, Mr. *Thomson* and Mr. *Mallet* excuse me, whose Tragedies either are to appear this Season, or the next. I fancy the latter, as I have seen or heard of no more but a *first* Act, yet, of each.

I have lately had an Address of *another Kind* from a Man of Letters, which gives me more Embarrass, and in the Conduct whereof I could wish I had your Advice, tho' I hardly know how to ask it. I hope soon to see the Critical Work you promis'd me, in which I hope to have some further Occasion of proving to you the real Deference I have to your Sentiments, and Esteem for your Person. I am, dear Sir,

*Your faithful and affectionate,
obliged Servant,
A. POPE.*

LETTER XIV.

From Mr. POPE, To AARON HILL, Esq;

Dear Sir,

OCT. 1. 1731.

IT was my Hope you had Thoughts of passing a few Days hereabouts, that made me impertinent enough to wish, you would make use of this Place, which

L E T T E R XII.

*From Mr. POPE, To AARON HILL, Esq;**S I R,**Twickenham, Sept. 25. 1731.*

THE Hurry I was in to send to you, made it a Message instead of a Letter, which I ask your Excuse for by this. If now you have Thoughts of the Country, pray think no further than my own House: I am wholly at your Service. The Weather is yet inviting: I could wish (if Miss *Hill*, under a Father's Authority, might venture), she saw me before I am quite decay'd (I mean all of me that is yet half flourishing, my Garden). You'll very much oblige me, and give Countenance to my Judgment, in letting your Tragedy pass thro' my Hands to any Persons to whom you care I should shew it. Believe me with great Truth (and a real Concern for what must so much afflict a good Mind),

*S I R,**Your affectionate**obedient Servant,**A. POPE.*

L E T T E R XIII.

*From Mr. POPE, To AARON HILL, Esq;**Dear Sir,**Sept. 29. 1731.*

I Return you the Inclos'd the Day after I receiv'd it, lest it should retard your finishing the Copy, now the Year draws toward Winter: And tho' I am in a great Hurry, which allows me to say little, only to tell you, in my Lord's Name and my own, that we think you shew even more Friendship and Confidence in us, than we have hitherto been justly intitled to, from any Use our Opinion could be of, to a Judgment so good as your own. We are fully satisfy'd; and 'tis but at a Word or two, that I can carp, with

with the utmost and most extended Severity of a Friend. It will be with infinitely greater Promptitude, and Pleasure, that I shall speak (every-where) my real Approbation and Esteem of the Performance, in which I shall do no more than discharge my Conscience. I wish sincerely, I could as well serve you in promoting its Success, as I can testify it deserves all Success. You will, I am sure, be so candid, and so reasonable, as to conclude, I would not decline writing your Epilogue on any but a just Reason, and indeed (to me) an invariable Maxim, which I have held these Twenty Years. Every poetical Friend I have, has had my Word, I never would; and my Leave to take the same Refusals I made him, ill, if ever I wrote one for another: And this very Winter, Mr. *Thomson* and Mr. *Mallet* excuse me, whose Tragedies either are to appear this Season, or the next. I fancy the latter, as I have seen or heard of no more but a *first* Act, yet, of each.

I have lately had an Address of *another Kind* from a Man of Letters, which gives me more Embarrass, and in the Conduct whereof I could wish I had your Advice, tho' I hardly know how to ask it. I hope soon to see the Critical Work you promis'd me, in which I hope to have some further Occasion of proving to you the real Deference I have to your Sentiments, and Esteem for your Person. I am, dear Sir,

*Your faithful and affectionate,
obliged Servant,
A. POPE.*

L E T T E R XIV.

From Mr. POPE, To AARON HILL, Esq;

Dear Sir,

OCT. 1. 1731.

IT was my Hope you had Thoughts of passing a few Days hereabouts, that made me impertinent enough to wish, you would make use of this Place, which

which is as much at your Service as its Master. It is otherwise too great a Trouble to you, no less than too great a Distinction shewn to me, to have you come purposely ; much less to give the young Lady the Fatigue of an Afternoon's Visit to what so little merits it. My Wish was, that you could have taken a Bed here, as long as you could allow yourself to be in the Country ; and have done me the Pleasure to see the Person you, now, love best in the World, with you ; either as giving you to me, or receiving you from me, on the Day that you came, or that you went. Be assur'd I always am with Truth,

Dear Sir,

Your most oblig'd,

affectionate, faithful Servant,

A. POPE.

If Miss Hill does not dine with us, I shall think all the Rites of Hospitality violated.

LETTER XV.

From Mr. POPE, To AARON HILL, Esq;

Dear Sir,

Monday Night, Oct. 9. 1731.

I SEE the Season will not allow me the Pleasure of seeing you, nor of shewing my faded Garden this Year to Miss Urania. I assure you I would willingly make a Trip to London on purpose to see you and her, but my Constitution, of late, has been faster in Decline than the Year. I have been as ill, as when I writ you that peevish Image of my Soul, a Letter, some Time since, which had the good Effect of making us know one another.

This is the first Day I have been able to see Lady S. who shew'd me a very polite Letter of yours that put her out of Countenance. The Truth is, she makes no Pretension to judge of Poetry. But the Tragedy will be shewn, as I told you, to One, or rather

ther (I think) to Both will be better. I wish you was not so soon to bring it on, by what Mr. *Savage* tells me of Mr. *Booth* and Mrs. *Porter*. I think it will be a Loss both to the Play, and to them, if they do not make one another shine: I hope, in a Week, to wait on you in *London*, and tell you with what plain Truth I am, dear Sir,

Yours,
A. POPE.

My Book I have no manner of Thought of publishing: It is of so various a Nature, that I know not under what Denomination, yet, to rank the many Parts of it; and shall write, just as I live, without knowing the *End* of my Works, or Days: The Whole will proceed, as my Life proceeds; and probably die, as I die.

LETTER XVI.

From Mr. POPE, To AARON HILL, Esq;

Dear Sir,

Thursday, Oct. 29. 1731.

THERE is an ill Fate hangs upon me in relation to the Pleasure I've often (from the very first Time I saw you at Dr. *Young's*) propos'd in our Acquaintance. I really stay'd that Night in Town, upon *Bowry's* Notice, which he left in Writing, that you should be at Home all Wednesday, and had dedicated three Hours to you, or, more properly, to myself with you. I ask'd, particularly, for Miss *Urania*; but thought myself, tho' old enough, not familiar enough, to ask to see her. I desire your first Notice, if you come this Way; or, rather, I wish you would take up your Lodging with me. In the mean time, pray send the Tragedy of *Athelwold* (for so I would call it), under Cover, to the Countess of *Suffolk*, before Monday, at her Lodgings in *St. James's*. I promis'd it her again; and if you think it of any Consequence

sequence that the K. should see it in Manuscript, I think nothing more easy. In Truth, all this is doing it no Credit; 'tis only doing some to those who may commend it. I could not imagine in what Parts it needed Addition; sure every Incident is well prepar'd: But no Man can see so far into his own Work as the Author, if a good one; so little, if a bad or indifferent one.—I am with Truth,

S I R,

Your very obliged

and faithful Servant,

A. POPE.

LETTER XVII.

From Mr. POPE, To AARON HILL, Esq;

S I R,

Chiswick, Nov. 1. 1731.

I Troubled you with a hasty Scrawl at Lord Tyrconnel's, in which I mention'd *Gilliver's* Desire to be the Publisher of your Tragedy: Since, he requests my Letter to recommend him. I find Mr. *Savage* has rais'd his Hope, by saying you had kept *yourself unengag'd, in Expectation that I would plead for him, and that you wonder'd I did not sooner.* If this be not one of those Things in which Mr. S. speaks upon Imagination, I am more oblig'd to you than ever I intended. For I assure you, I had no Thought of *imposing*, nay, not even of *proposing* a Bookseller, for fear your great Complacency toward me, should lead you, more, than your own Inclination, to another Bookseller. But if you have no such Byass, this Man I really think honest, and capable in his Business. I hope in a few Days to meet you in Town, and am sincerely yours, and the young Lady's,

A. POPE.

I just

I just now receive your very kind Letter, but can answer it no otherwise than by going about what you propose. I'll write first, and then see every body I can in Town on *Tuesday*, &c.

L E T T E R XVIII.

From Mr. POPE, To AARON HILL, Esq;

Dear Sir,

Nov. 12. 1731.

I SHALL have the Pleasure (sick or well) to be at the first Representation of your Play To-morrow, with Lord *Burlington* and Lord *Bathurst*, and one or two more. Another noble Lord, who understands you best, must be contented to read the two last Acts in his Study: But Sir *Will. Wyndham*, with Mr. *Gay*, and some others, will be there also, in another Place, in his stead.—I write this that I may not take up a Minute of your Time in calling on me To-morrow; but if you will send to the Office To-night for Places for four People, we will order a Man or two to go to keep 'em for us: Lord *Burlington* comes on purpose to Town. I am, with great Truth,

Yours,

A. POPE.

I've yet heard no Account from Court.

L E T T E R XIX.

From Mr. POPE, To AARON HILL, Esq;

Dear Sir,

Sat. Morn. Nov. 14. 1731.

I Cannot leave *London* without thanking you for the Pleasure you gave me last Night, by which I see you can as well make Actors, as Plays: Yet I own I receive more Pleasure from reading, than seeing your

Athelwold.

Athelwold. I thought the best Part of the Audience very attentive, and was told, several Ladies were mov'd to Tears. It is Pity Mrs. *Cibber's* Voice and Person were not a little higher; she speaks extremely justly, and seems to be Mistress of her Part. I could not come soon enough for the Prologue, but the Epilogue is a very humorous one. I am asham'd to trouble you; but being gone out of Town, and fearing the Mistakes of Servants, I beg a Box may be had for *Monday*, the third Night (if there be any empty), for Mrs. *Blount*, a particular Friend of mine. I yesterday saw Lady *Suffolk*, and found, tho' their Majesties had not had Time to read, yet they were possess'd with a good Opinion of the Play; and she would not part with the Copy, expecting it would be call'd for every Day. I must once more acknowledge the very obliging Manner in which you favour'd the Bookseller, as well as the particular Generosity to him. I can add no more, but an Assurance of the Sincerity with which I am,

Dear Sir,

Your most oblig'd

and affectionate Servant,

A. POPE.

I am hasten'd away, on hearing my Mother is not well: As soon as I return, I hope we may pass more Time together.

LETTER XX.

From Mr. POPE, To AARON HILL, Esq;

Dear Sir,

Twickenham, Dec. 22. 1731.

I Thank you for your Tragedy, which I have now read over a sixth Time, and of which I not only preserve, but increase, my Esteem. You have been kind to this Age, in not telling the next, in your Preface, the ill Taste of the Town, of which the Reception

ception you describe it to have given of your Play (worse, indeed, than I had heard, or could have imagin'd), is a more flagrant Instance than any of those Trifles mention'd in my Epistle; which yet, I hear, the fore Vanity of our Pretenders to Taste flinches at extremely—The Title you mention had been a properer to that Epistle—I have heard no Criticisms about it, nor do I listen after 'em; *Nos hæc novimus esse nihil* (I mean, I think the Verses to be so): But as you are a Man of tender Sentiments of Honour, I know it will grieve you to hear another undeservedly charg'd with a Crime his Heart is free from: For, if there be Truth in the World, I declare to you, I never imagin'd the least Application of what I said of *Timon* could be made to the D. of *Ch—s*, than whom there is scarce a more blameless, worthy and generous, beneficent Character, among all our Nobility: And if I have not lost my Senses, the Town has lost 'em, by what I heard so late, as but two Days ago, of the Uproar on this Head. I am certain, if you calmly read every Particular of that Description, you'll find almost all of 'em point-blank the Reverse of that Person's *Villa*. It's an aukward Thing for a Man to print, in Defence of his own Work, against a Chimæra: You know not who, or what, you fight against: The Objections start up in a new Shape, like the Armies and Phantoms of Magicians, and no Weapon can cut a Mist, or a Shadow. Yet it would have been a Pleasure to me, to have found some Friend saying a Word in my Justification, against a most malicious Falshood. I speak of such, as have known by their own Experience, these twenty Years, that I always took up their Defence, when any Stream of Calumny ran upon 'em. If it gives the Duke one Moment's Uneasiness, I should think myself ill paid, if the whole Earth admir'd the Poetry; and believe me, would rather never have written a Verse in my Life, than that any one of 'em should

trouble a truly good Man. It was once my Case before, but happily reconcil'd; and among generous Minds nothing so endears Friends, as the having offended one another.

I lament the Malice of the Age, that studies to see its own Likeness in every thing; I lament the Dulness of it, that cannot see an Excellence: The first is my Unhappiness, the second yours. I look upon the Fate of your Piece, like that of a great Treasure, which is bury'd as soon as brought to Light; but it is sure to be dug up the next Age, and enrich Posterity.

I have been very sensible, on these two Occasions, to feel them (as I have done) at a Time, when I daily fear'd the Loss of (what is, and ought to be dearer to me than any Reputation, *but that of a Friend*, or than any thing of my own, *except my Morals*) the Loss of a most tender Parent—She is alive, and that is all! I have perceiv'd my Heart in this, and you may believe me sincerely,

*Dear Sir,
Your faithful and
really affectionate Servant,*

A. POPE.

L E T T E R XXI.

From Mr. POPE, To AARON HILL, Esq;

Dear Sir, Twickenham, Nov. 13. 1732.

I Writ to you a very hasty Letter, being warm'd in the Cause of an old Acquaintance, in which I was sure you would concur, I mean *John Dennis*, whose Circumstances were describ'd to me in the most moving Manner. I went next Day with the Lord to whom you directed your Letter and Play, which, at my Return home, I receiv'd but Yesterday. I thank you for your agreeable Present to my Grotto, for your more agreeable Letter, and your most excellent Translation of *Voltaire*, to whom you have preserv'd

all the Beauty he had, and added the Nerves he wanted. This short Acknowledgment is all I can make just now; I am just taken up by Mr. *Thomson*, in the Perusal of a new Poem he has brought me: I wish you were with us. The first Day I see *London*, I will wait on you, on many Accounts, but on none more than my being affectionately, and with true Esteem, dear Sir,

Yours,

A. POPE.

I desire Miss *Urania* will know me for her Servant.

LETTER XXII.

From Mr. POPE, To AARON HILL, Esq;

SIR,

Twickenham, May 22. 1733.

YOUR very kind Letter came hither in my Absence, which occasion'd my Delay till now in acknowledging it. Your Partiality to me, both as a Poet, and as a Man, is great; the former I deserve not, but the latter I will never forfeit. It would be wronging your Modesty to say much of the Verses you inclose, but it would be wronging Sense and Poetry, not to say they are fine ones, and such as I could not forget, having once seen them.

I have almost forgot what I told you of the Patent; but at the Time I told it, I could not well be mistaken, having just then had the Account from Mr. *Davenant* the Envoy: Indeed I fancy it was only of his Ancestors Patent that he spoke (unless Sir *William Davenant* bought up *Killigrew's*); I know no Way of coming to the Knowledge of this Affair, Mr. *Davenant* being now abroad, and I know not where. But if you would have me write about it, I will learn his Direction.

I am at all Times glad to hear of you, on any Occasion. I would willingly wait on you in the

Park, if I knew your Times : I have call'd twice or thrice there in vain, without being heard. I guess'd you were in the Country. My sincere good Wishes attend you ; and your agreeable Family, as far as I have seen of it, I cannot but wish well to. I am,

Dear Sir,
Your most affectionate
and faithful Servant,
A. POPE.

L E T T E R XXIII.

From MR. POPE, To AARON HILL, Esq;

S I R,

June 2. 1738.

I SENT you as honest an Answer as I could, to the Letter you favour'd me with ; and am sorry you imagine any *civil Reproach*, or *latent Meaning*, where I meant to express myself with the utmost Openness. I would assure you, if you please, by my Oath, as well as my Word, that I am in no Degree displeas'd at any Freedom you can take with me in a private Letter, or with my Writings in publick. I again insist, that you alter or soften no one Criticism of yours in my Favour ; nor deprive yourself of the Liberty, nor the World of the Profit, of your freest Remarks on my Errors.

In what I said, I gave you a true Picture of my own Heart, as far as I know it myself. It is true, I have shewn a *Scorn* of some *Writers* ; but it proceeded from an Experience that they were bad Men, or bad Friends, or vile Hirelings ; in which Case, their being Authors did not make them, to me, either more respectable, or more formidable. As for any other Pique, my Mind is not so susceptible of it as you have seem'd, on each Occasion, too much inclin'd (I think) to believe. What may have sometimes seem'd a *Neglect* of others, was rather a *Laziness* to cultivate or contract new Friends, when I was satisfied

sied with those I had; or when I apprehended their Demands were too high for me to answer.

I thank you for the Confidence you shew you have in me, in telling me what you judge amiss in my *Nature*. If it be (as you too partially say) my only Fault, I might soon be a perfect Character: For I would endeavour to correct this Fault in myself, and intreat you to correct all those in my Writings; I see, by the Specimen you generously gave me in your late Letter, you are able to do it; and I would rather owe (and *own* I owe) that Correction to your Friendship, than to my own Industry.

For the last Paragraph of yours, I shall be extremely ready to convey what you promise to send me, to my Lord B. I am in Hopes very speedily to see him myself, and will, in that Case, be the Bearer; if not, I shall send it, by the first safe Hand, to him. I am truly glad of any Occasion of proving myself, with all the Respect that is consistent with Sincerity,

S I R,

*Your most obliged and
affectionate Servant,*

A. POPE.

LETTER, XXIV.

From Mr. POPE, To AARON HILL, Esq;:

S I R,

June 9. 1738.

THE Favour of yours of *May* the 11th, had not been unacknowledged so long, but it reached me not till my Return from a Journey, which had carried me from Scene to Scene, *where Gods might wander with Delight*. I am sorry yours was attended with any Thoughts less pleasing, either from the Conduct towards you of the World in general, or of any one else, in particular. As to the Subject-matter of the Letter, I found what I have often done in receiving Letters from those I most esteemed, and

most wished to be esteemed by ; a great Pleasure in reading it, and a great Inability to answer it. I can only say, you oblige me, in seeming so well to know me again ; as one extremely willing that the free Exercise of Criticism should extend over my own Writings, as well as those of others, whenever the Public may receive the least Benefit from it ; as I question not they will a great deal, when exerted by you. I am sensible of the Honour you do me, in proposing to send me your Work before it appears : If you do, I must insist, that no Use in my Favour be made of that Distinction, by the Alteration or softening of any Censure of yours on any Line of mine.

What you have observed in your Letter I think just ; only I would acquit myself in one Point : I could not have the least *Pique* to Mr. *Th.* in what is cited in the Treatise of the *Bathos* from the Play which I never supposed to be his : He gave it as *Shakespear's*, and I take it to be of that Age : And indeed the Collection of those, and many more of the Thoughts censured there, was not made by me, but Dr. *Arbuthnot*.—I have had two or three Occasions to lament, that you seem to know me much better as a *Poet*, than as a *Man*. You can hardly conceive how little either *Pique* or Contempt I bear to any Creature, unless for immoral or dirty Actions : Any Mortal is at full Liberty, unanswer'd, to write and print of me as a Poet, to praise me one Year, and blame me another ; only I desire him to spare my Character as an honest Man, over which he can have no private, much less any public, Right, without some personal Knowledge of my Heart, or the Motives of my Conduct : Nor is it a sufficient Excuse, to alledge he was *so* or *so informed*, which was the Case with those Men.

I am sincere in all I say to you, and have no Vanity in saying it. You really over-value me greatly
in

in my Poetical Capacity ; and I am sure your Work would do me infinitely too much Honour, even if it blamed me oftener than it commended : For the first you will do with Lenity, the last with Excess. But I could be glad to part with some Share of any good Man's Admiration, for some of his Affection, and his Belief that I am not wholly undeserving to be thought, what I am to you,

S I R,

A most faithful, affectionate Servant,

A. POPE.

LETTER XXV.

From Mr. POPE, To AARON HILL, Esq;

S I R,

July 21. 1738.

I NEED not assure you in many Words, that I join my Suffrage intirely with Lord B.'s in general, after a fourth reading your Tragedy of *Cæsar*. I think no Characters were ever more nobly sustained than those of *Cæsar* and *Brutus* in particular : You excel throughout in the Greatness of Sentiment ; and I add, that I never met with more striking Sentences, or lively short Reprizes. There is almost every-where such a Dignity in the Scenes, that instead of pointing out any one Scene, I can scarce point out any that wants it, in any Degree (except you would a little raise that of the *Plebeians* in the last Act). That Dignity is admirably reconciled with Softness, in the Scenes between *Cæsar* and *Calpurnia* : And all those between *Cæsar* and *Brutus* are a noble Strife between Greatness and Humanity. The Management of the Whole is as artful as it is noble. Whatever particular Remarks we have made further, will be rather the Subject of Conversation than a Letter, of which we shall both be glad of an Opportunity, either here at *Twickenham*, or in Town, as shall best suit your Convenience. Pray, Sir, let
this

this confirm you in the Opinion you kindly, and indeed justly, entertain of the Wish I feel (and ever felt, notwithstanding Mistakes) to be, and to be thought,

*Sincerely your obliged, affectionate,
and faithful Servant,*

A. POPE.

LETTER XXVI.

From Mr. POPE, To AARON HILL, Esq;

S I R,

Twickenham, Aug. 17. 1738.

I AM forced to say but little to you, tho' my Spirit has been warm'd by the kind (and let me add, the just) Manner, in which you took our last Letter. My Lord (who has not only resolved to make himself my Guest, but an Inhabitant of this Place during all his Stay in this Kingdom) is at this Time fixed to this Place too closely, by a Fever, which has confined him to his Bed and Chamber some Days. I am but just now satisfied that he is out of Danger; and I am as sure, as that he *lives*, that he will be glad to see you *here*. And I think it certain (if you can get those Affairs over which you mention, as soon as I wish you at Ease), that you may find him here this Fortnight: That I shall take a warm Part in bringing you together, my own Heart knows: And let me tell you, when you know that Heart as well, as I hope Fortune will not long hinder you from doing (tho' many unlucky Strokes of her Influence have been too strong upon us both, who *must* else have naturally united, as we mutually love and hate the same Things), I believe, trust, and pray, we shall perfectly understand one another. Believe me till then, upon my bare Assurance, very faithfully, without superfluous Words, in one Word,

Dear Sir, Yours,

A. POPE,

LETTER XXVII.

From Mr. POPE, To AARON HILL, Esq;

S I R,

Sept. 12. 1738.

I HAVE now little to say of your Tragedy, which I return with my Thanks for your Indulgence to my Opinion, which I see so absolutely defer'd to, that I wish I had cross'd less frequently. I cannot find another Thing I think a Fault in you.

But my Lord thinks, three Things may yet be reconsider'd. *Brutus*, on Sight of the Warrant sign'd for his Death, takes at once the Resolution of murdering *Cæsar*, as none of his Father. Quere, Whether in the Scene that follows between him and *Cæsar*, all Tenderness on the Side of *Brutus*, and all beyond the Point of Honour that Friendship exacted, should not rather be avoided than heightened?

Another Quere is, Whether it would not beget more Indignation in the Audience against *Cassius*, and more Compassion for *Cæsar*, to shew that *Cassius* suspected *Brutus* to be *Cæsar's* Son, and therefore exacted from *Brutus* the Oath of sparing neither *Father*, *Relation*, &c.

The third Thing is, Whether the Efforts made by *Cæsar* to prevent the Civil War, not only by the equal Offer he made, while the Matter was under Debate in the Senate (and which the Consuls *Lenotulus* and *Marcellus* refused to report to the Senate), but by the Message he sent to *Pompey*, when he was at *Brundisium*, to desire a Meeting, to settle the Matter, and avoid the Civil War.—*Vid. Cæs. Comm. de bell. Civili, lib. 1.* The Mention of these somewhere in the Play might help to remove the Prepossession against *Cæsar*.

After our little Cavils (for so we will rather call minute and verbal Points of Criticism) we owe you the Justice to extol highly, what we highly approve, and

and you need not desire us to speak as we think : 'Tis what we have (in different Ways) done all our Lives, where it was to our Prejudice, and cannot but do here, where it is to our Honour. I only wish you a Stage, Actors; and an Audience worthy of you, and It.—I have often wished to live to see the Day when Prologues and Epilogues should be no more. I wish a great Genius would break thro' the silly, useless, Formality. But at least I would have one try, to leave the Audience *full* of the *Effects* of a good Tragedy, without an Epilogue. Let me add another Hint, concerning the Apparatus and Circumstantials of your Play (since I have nothing left more to wish in the Play itself); that you would intitle it barely, *The Tragedy of Cæsar*, and give no Intimation of his being a *Patriot*; for I fear, instead of preparing the Audience, it might revolt them, and put all the little Criticks upon carping previously at the very Design and Character; which would appear by Degrees, and with the proper Preparations, in the Piece on the Stage. Another thing was a Thought of my Lord's, that it should be printed before acting, a Day or two; for the Sentiments are so thick-sown, and the Sense so deep sometimes, that they require more Attention and Thought than the Hearer may be apt to give on the first Representation. I am not positive, either as to his, or my Thought, but submit them to your Consideration.

I have nothing to add, but to lament our Unhappiness, that we cannot see you personally to confirm what these Letters tell you, of our real Opinion of your Work, Esteem of its Author, and Wishes for your Success, in this, and every thing. I am,

S I R,

Your most faithful and obliged Servant,

A. POPE.

LET-

LETTER XXVIII.

*From Mr. POPE, To AARON HILL, Esq;**Dear Sir,**Nov. 5. 1738.*

THIS is quite a Letter of Business, and therefore excuse it ; I will not mix in it a Word of Affection, which I have not a Moment's time to express, and will not prejudice the sacred Idea of Friendship.

It is near a Month ago that I try'd to see Mr. *Thomson*, to know the Time of his Tragedy : He was not within my Reach ; and therefore at last I wrote to him, and also to Mr. *M*——, to let them both know the Deference you paid them, and the heroic (I will not call it less) Disinterestedness you express'd in regard to them. I have not yet been able to hear where they are, or any way to have an Answer further, than I have learn'd it will be impossible for either of them to bring on their Plays early (a Friend of theirs telling me they are in no Forwardness) till the Middle or End of the Winter ; therefore you may have room. I wish from my Soul you may get yours first, as well acted as it deserves. A better, that may eclipse it, or even worthily follow it, I hardly expect to see.—But upon this Notice, I believe you may safely advance it, the sooner the better.

My Lord *B.* is yet with me, more properly I yet belong to him, Body as well as Mind (for my Mind is every-where his). I would to God you had any Opportunity of seeing us before we part ; my House should be yours, as much of it as is not his. I believe I shall soon go with him on a little Journey before he quits *England*. You'll forgive the abrupt Conclusion of this ; yet it may tell you all the longest and

and best-written Letter could tell you, that I am very sincerely,

S I R,

Your much obliged, and

really affectionate Servant,

A. POPE.

LETTER XXIX.

From Mr. POPE, To AARON HILL, Esq;

Dear Sir,

Dec. 8. 1738.

I HAVE been confirmed by Mr. *Thomson* as to the Retardment of his Play, of which he has written but two Acts. I have since seen Mr. *M—*, who has finished his, but is very willing yours should be first brought on, in *January* as you propose, or after his in *February*, whichsoever may be most agreeable to you. He farther offers any Assistance he can give you, in case of your own Absence, as to treating with Mr. *F—* (with whom he thinks you cannot be too careful or explicit), or attending the Rehearsals for you, which he promises to undertake with all Diligence, if you are not provided with another Friend in that Case. He has heard of some Impertinence, which may be apprehended from one Person's Refusal or Unwillingness to act, and believes he can employ some proper Influence to bring him to a right Behaviour. These, with any other Services in which you may please to employ him, he bids me assure you, it will be a high Satisfaction to him to engage in.

I must express, on my own Part, a real Regret to be so little useful to you. I can do no more than join with Lord *B.* in paying due Praises to so meritorious a Work; our Suffrage is an airy Tribute, from whence no solid Good redounds to you; and I find myself still more inclined to the *Man*, than the *Author*, if I could be any way instrumental to the Happiness

piness or Ease of so generous an one. I could almost wish myself a Minister to patronize such a Genius, and I could almost wish my Lord one again, for no other Reason ; even tho' his Country wants such an one, as well as his Friends.

I have never once been able to see Mr. *Thomson* in Person ; when I do (and it shall be soon) he shall know how much he is obliged to you for that Plan of an Alteration of his Tragedy, which is too good for me, with any Honesty, to put upon him as my own. Believe me, Sir, with great Truth, and the warmest Disposition to do you Justice (before Men and Angels),

Yours faithfully,

A. POPE.

LETTER XXX.

From Mr. POPE, To AARON HILL, Esq;

Dear Sir,

London, Feb. 12. 1738-9.

I HAVE felt an Uneasiness of Mind (occasioned by a conscious Sense, how unequally I have express'd my Anger and Contempt, at the Treatment of your *Cæsar* by the Man of the Stage) ever since I last wrote to you ; and a hundred Interruptions from Day to Day (for I have lived in the World, and a busy and idle World both, it is) have ever since hindered me from enjoying one Hour of collected Thought. Yet I am the less concerned, since, by my Delay, I can now tell you I have last Night seen Mr. *Mallet's* Play, the fifth Act of which I had not before read, thro' those Interruptions I have mention'd. It succeeded (hitherto at least ; for Yesterday was the first Day) as well as I could expect : But so vilely acted in the Womens Parts and the Mens (except two) that I wonder it could succeed. Mr. *Thomson*, after many shameful Tricks from the Manager, is determined to act his Play at the other Theatre, where the Advan-

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vantage

vantage lies as to the Women, and the Success of *his* will depend upon them (I heartily wish you would follow his Example, that we might not be deprived of *Cæsar*). I have yet seen but three Acts of Mr. *Thomson's*, but I am told, and believe by what I have seen, that it excels in the Pathetic. The Dignity of Sentiment, and Grandeur of Character, will still be *Cæsar's*, as in his History, so in your Poetry, superior to any.

The Person to whom you intended so great a Compliment as to address that Piece to his Name, is very sensible of your delicate Manner of Thinking: He bids me assure you, his own Knowledge of your Intention is sufficient Pleasure to him, and desires you would not think of doing him either Favour or Justice, till the World knows better how to do itself the former, in doing you the latter. He is still detained here by the Perverseness of his Affairs; and wishes, as I most heartily do also, that Fortune did not treat you so much alike. The Stage is as ungrateful to you, as his Country to him: You are both sure of Posterity, and may say in the mean time with *Scipio*, *Ingrata Patria, ne ossa quidem habeas!* Believe me most truly,

S I R,

Your affectionate, angry Servant,

A. POPE.

LETTER XXXI.

From Mr. POPE, To AARON HILL, Esq;

S I R,

Jan. 26. 1730-31.

I AM oblig'd to you for your Compliment, and can truly say, I never gave you just Cause of Complaint. You once mistook on a Bookseller's idle Report, and publickly express'd your Mistake; yet you mistook a second time, that two initial Letters, only, were meant of you, tho' every Letter in the

the Alphabet was put in the same manner: And, in Truth (except some few), those Letters were set at Random to occasion what they did occasion, the Suspicion of bad and jealous Writers, of which Number I could never reckon Mr. *Hill*. and most of whose Names I did not know.

Upon this Mistake you were too ready to attack me, in a Paper of very pretty Verses, in some publick Journal.—I should imagine the *Dunciad* meant you a real Compliment, and so it has been thought by many, who have ask'd, to whom that Passage made that oblique *Panegyrick*? As to the Notes, I am weary of telling a great Truth, which is, that I am not Author of 'em; tho' I love Truth so well, as fairly to tell you, Sir, I think even that Note a Commendation, and should think myself not ill us'd to have the same Words said of me: Therefore, believe me, I never was other than friendly to you, in my own Mind.

Have I not much more Reason to complain of *The Caveat*? Where give me Leave, Sir, to tell you, with the same Love of Truth, and with the Frankness it inspir'd (which, I hope, you will see, thro' this whole Letter), I am falsely abus'd, in being represented “*sneakingly to approve, and want the Worth to cherish, or befriend Men of Merit.*” It is, indeed, Sir, a very great Error: I am sorry the Author of that Reflection knew me no better, and happen'd to be unknown to those who could have better inform'd him: For I have the Charity to think, he was misled only by his Ignorance of me, and the Benevolence to forgive the worst Thing that ever (in my Opinion) was said of me, on that Supposition.

I do faithfully assure you, I never was angry at any Criticism, made on my Poetry, by whomsoever: If I could do Mr. *Dennis* any humane Office, I would, tho' I were sure he would abuse me personally Tomorrow; therefore it is no great Merit in me, to

find, at my Heart, I am your Servant. I am very sorry you ever was of another Opinion.—I see, by many Marks, you distinguish'd me from my cotemporary Writers: Had we known one another, you had distinguish'd me from others, as a *Man*, and no ill, or ill-natur'd one. I only wish you knew, as well as I do, how much I prefer Qualities of the Heart to those of the Head: I vow to God, I never thought any great Matters of my poetical Capacity; I only thought it a little better, comparatively, than that of some very mean Writers, who are too proud.—But, I do know *certainly*, my moral Life is *superior* to that of most of the *Wits* of these Days. This is a silly Letter, but it will shew you my Mind honestly, and, I hope, convince you, I can be, and am,

S I R,

Your very affectionate
and humble Servant,

A. POPE.

As there had, formerly, been some little Misunderstanding between Mr. Pope and Mr. Hill, it is thought necessary to insert, in this Place, two or three of Mr. Hill's Letters, that the Reader might be fully apprised of the Reason, each thought he had to take it ill of the other: And, in Mr. Hill's Works, which are going to be printed by Subscription, 'tis humbly conceived, there will be many Letters (not only writ to Mr. Pope, but also to Persons of the highest Rank) that will be both instructive, and entertaining, to the curious Reader.

L E T.

L E T T E R XXXII.

From Mr. HILL, To Mr. POPE.

S I R,

Jan. 28. 1730-I.

YOUR Answer, regarding no Part of mine, but the Conclusion, you must pardon my Compliment to the Close of yours, in return ; if I agree with you, that your Letter is *weaker*, than one would have expected.

You assure me, that I did not know you so well, as I might, had I happened to be known to others, who could have instructed my Ignorance ; and I begin to find, indeed, that I was less acquainted with you, than I imagined : But your last Letter has enlighten'd me, and I can never be in Danger of mistaking you, for the future.

Your Enemies have often told me, that your *Spleen* was, at least, as distinguishable, as your *Genius* : And it will be kinder, I think, to believe them, than impute to Rudeness, or ill Manners, the Return you were pleased to make, for the Civility, with which I addressed you.

I will, therefore, suppose you to have been *peevish*, or in *Pain*, while you were writing me this Letter : And, upon that Supposition, shall endeavour to undeceive you.—If I did not love you, as a good *Man*, while I esteem you, as a good *Writer*, I should read you without Reflection : And it were doing too much Honour to *your* Friends, and too little to my *own* Discernment, to go to *them* for a Character of your Mind, which I was able enough to extract from your Writings.

But, to imitate your Love of Truth, with the Frankness you have taught me, I wish the *Great* Qualities of your Heart were as strong in you as the *Good* ones : You would then have been above that Emotion and Bitterness, wherewith you remember

Things which want Weight to deserve your Anguish.

Since you were not the Writer of the Notes to the *Dunciad*, it would be impertinent to trouble you with the Complaint I intended:—I will only observe, that the Author was in the *Right*, to believe me capable of a second *Repentance*; but, I hope, I was incapable of that second *Sin*, which should have been previous to his Supposition.—If the initial Letters *A. H.* were not *meant* to stand for my Name, yet, they were, every-where, read so, as you might have seen in *Mist's Journal*, and other publick Papers; and I had shewn Mr. *Pope* an Example, how reasonable I thought it to clear a Mistake, publicly, which had been publicly propagated.—One Note, among so many, would have done me this Justice: And the Generosity of such a Proceeding could have left no Room, for that offensive *Sneakingly*, which, though, perhaps, too harsh a Word, was the properest a Man could chuse, who was satirizing an Approbation, that he had never observed warm enough to declare itself to the World, but in Defence of the *Great*, or the *Popular*.

Again, if the Author of the Notes knew, that *A. H.* related not to me, what Reason had he to allude to that Character, as mine, by observing, that I had published Pieces bordering upon *Bombast*—A Circumstance so independent on any other Purpose of the Note, that I should forget to *whom* I am writing, if I thought it wanted Explanation.

As to your oblique Panegyrick, I am not under so blind an Attachment to the *Goddeſs* I was devoted to in the *Dunciad*, but that I knew it was a *Commendation*; tho' a dirtier one than I wished for; who am, neither fond of some of the Company, in which I was listed—the noble Reward, for which I was to become a Diver;—the allegoric Muddiness, in which I was to try my Skill;—nor the Institutor of

of the Games, you were so kind to allow me a Share in.

Since, however, you could see, so clearly, that I ought to be satisfied with the Praise, and forgive the Dirt it was mixed with, I am sorry, it seemed not as reasonable, that you should pardon me for returning your Compliment, with more, and opener, Praise, mixed with less of that Dirtiness, which we have, both, the good Taste to complain of.

The *Caveat*, Sir, was mine.—It would have been ridiculous to suppose you ignorant of it : I cannot think, you need be told, that it meant you no Harm ;—and it had scorn'd to appear under the borrow'd Name, it carries, but that the whimsical Turn of the Preface, would have made my own a Contradiction.—I promise you, however, that, for the future, I will publish nothing, without my Name, that concerns you, or your Writings. I have, now, almost finished, *An Essay on Propriety, and Impropriety, in Design, Thought, and Expression, illustrated, by Examples, in both Kinds, from the Writings of Mr. Pope* ; and, to convince you how much more Pleasure it gives me, to distinguish your *Lights*, than your *Shades* ;—and that I am as willing as I ought to be, to see, and acknowledge my Faults ; I am ready, with all my Heart, to let it run thus, if it would, otherwise, create the least Pain in you :—*An Essay on Propriety, and Impropriety, &c. illustrated by Examples, of the first, from the Writings of Mr. Pope, and of the last, from those of the Author.*

I am sorry to hear you say, you never thought any great Matters of your *Poetry*.—It is, in my Opinion, the Characteristic you are to hope your *Distinction* from : To be *Honest* is the Duty of every plain Man ! Nor, since the *Soul* of Poetry is Sentiment, can a Great Poet want *Morality*. But your *Honesty* you possess in common with a *Million*, who will never be
remem-

remembered ; whereas your *Poetry* is a Peculiar, that will make it impossible, you should be forgotten.

If you had not been in the *Spleen*, when you wrote me this Letter, I persuade myself, you would not, immediately after censuring the *Pride* of Writers, have asserted, that you, *certainly, know* your moral Life, above that of most of the Wits of these Days : At any other Time, you would have remembered, that *Humility* is a moral Virtue. It was a bold Declaration ; and the *Certainty* with which you know it, stands in need of a better *Acquaintance* than you seem to have had with the *Tribe* ; since you tell me, in the same Letter, that many of their *Names* were *unknown* to you.

Neither would it appear, to your own Reason, at a cooler Juncture, over-consistent with the Morality you are so sure of, to scatter the Letters of the whole Alphabet, annexed, at Random, to Characters of a light and ridiculous Cast, confusedly, with Intent to provoke jealous Writers, into Resentment, that you might take Occasion, from that Resentment, to expose and depreciate their Characters.

The Services, you tell me, you would do Mr. *Dennis*, even tho' he should abuse you, in Return, will, I hope, give him some Title to expect an Exertion of your recommendatory Influence in his Behalf : A Man, so *popular*, as you, might secure him a great Subscription : This would merit to be called a *Service* ; and, the more the World should find you abused in the Works you had recommended, so much the more glorious Proof would they see, that your Morals were, in Truth, as superior, as you represent them, to those of your Cotemporaries. Tho' you will pardon me the *Pride* of wondering, a little, how this Declaration came to be made to *me*, whose Condition not standing in need of such Services, it was not, I think, so necessary,

you

you should have taken the Trouble to talk of them.

Upon the Whole, Sir, I find, I am so sincerely your *Friend*, that it is not, in your own Power, to make me your *Enemy*: Else, that unnecessary Air, of Neglect, and Superiority, which is so remarkable, in the Turn of your Letter, would have nettled me to the Quick; and I must triumph, in my Turn, at the Strength of my own Heart, who can, after it, still find, and profess myself, most affectionately and sincerely,

Your humble Servant,

A. HILL.

LETTER XXXIII.

From Mr. HILL, To Mr. POPE.

SIR,

Feb. 10. 1735-32.

I AM oblig'd to you for your Letter from *Parsons Green*, and come heartily into the Proposal, it begins with: A mutual Resolution to forget in each other, the Appearance of every Thing, that has been distasteful to either, agrees, I am sure, with the Affection, I feel for you, at my Heart, where it is founded on a natural Strength, both of *Reason*, and *Inclination*.

The *Caveat* began, originally, with the Vision: I added not, till after it was finish'd, those Lines, among which are the unlucky Ones, that displeas'd you. I was fearful, lest, without something of that kind, by way of Introduction, the Reader might think himself push'd, too abruptly, into the Allegory: But, I confess, it was unreasonable in me to cover your *Praise*, which I delighted in, under the Veil of an Allegory; and explain my *Censure*, too openly, in which I could take no Pleasure.

The Truth is, I lov'd you so well, and thought of you so often, that it was not easy for me, in any
Humour,

Humour, to write Verse, and not dwell upon you.—
Have you never been *jealous* of a favourite *Mistress*?
—Have you never, under a *Pique*, at her suppos'd
Neglect, said, what she could no more deserve, than
you could think she did, upon cooler Reflection?—
And have you not found, after all, that you was
never the less her *Lover*?

Your Offer is very kind, to prevail on the Editor
of the *Dunciad*, to leave out the Note, or declare,
that I was not meant in it; But I am satisfied:
—It is over;—and deserves no more of your Appli-
cation.

I agree with you, It is *Morality* makes us belov'd:
I know it, from the Effect of your Writings; where
I *but admire* the Harmony, and the Elegance, while
I *love* the Generosity, and the Candor of the Senti-
ments. I prefer too, as you do, *Friendships*, and
the honest Enjoyments of Life, to *Fame*, and noisy
Praises; but I am glad you are happier, than you wish
to be, who enjoy both Benefits, together.

Yet, if there was nothing desirable in *Fame*, there
could be nothing detestable in *Slander*; and your
honest Uneasiness, at being *thought* worse than you
are, would, in that Case, be in Danger of passing for
a *Weakness*.

I know, however, that you consider *Praise* in a
nobler Light than *Vanity*.—There is, in *Fame*, the
Promulgation of a good Man's Example, which his
natural Life being too short to extend so far as he
wishes, *That* Defect is supplied by the second Life,
he receives, from his *Memory*.

I have seen, and been ashamed of that low Turn,
which Mr. *Dennis* gave, to your Good-nature.—
Where a Man's *Passions* are too strong for his *Vir-
tues*, his *Suspicion* will be too hard for his *Prudence*:
He has often been weak enough to treat you in a
Manner that moves too much Indignation against
Himself, not to leave it unnecessary for you, also, to
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punish him.—Neither of us would chuse him for a *Friend*; but none of the *Frailties* of his *Temper*, any more than the heavy *Formalities* of his *Style*, can prevent your acknowledging, there is often *Weight*, in his *Arguments*; and *Matter*, that deserves Encouragement, to be met with, in his *Writings*.

I will soon, Sir, convince you, that my Sensibility is not so tender, as you suppose it to be: I am so far from an Inclination to defend some *Pieces*, which I was too much a Boy, when I publish'd, that I embrace all Occasions of exposing 'em, myself, to the Contempt they have merited.

I am already too much oblig'd, not to blush at your Mention of the *Odyssey*, with a View of sending it to my Daughter; and *She* is too inquisitive a Lover of what gives her *Instruction* with *Delight*, to have been satisfied without finding, in her Closet, whatever she had heard you had publish'd.

As a Proof, how determin'd I am, to throw nothing upon the World, that may give you Cause of Complaint, I will send you, in Manuscript, the *Essay on Propriety*, as soon as it is finish'd: I do the same, now, by a smaller Piece, I am about to publish, because you will find yourself concern'd in some Part of it.—I am, Sir, with great Truth,

Your most humble,

and most obedient Servant,

A. HILL.

LETTER XXXIV.

From Mr. HILL, To Mr. POPE.

SIR,

June 17. 1738.

THE Pleasure, I was sure to receive with your Letter, brought an unexpected Chagrin in its Company, from a Vein of civil Reproach, that runs thro' it; which I can better discern, than account for; since I must not suspect, without wronging my Ideas

Ideas of your Equity, that you could be displeas'd at the Freedom I took in my Sentiments. If I believ'd they had given you the smallest Offence, I would rather commit my Essay, in its present rough State, to the Flames, than transcribe it, either for yourself, or the Publick.

Indeed it was with a kind of foreboding Reluctance that I censur'd any Passage of *yours*; and to confess the Truth, frankly, I had only one Reason for doing it. After I had convinc'd myself, thoroughly, that *Propriety*, in some of the Lights I was considering it under, had been universally neglected, in Poetry, I foresaw, it would be impossible to establish the Belief of a Fact so unlikely, without citing the strongest *Examples*:—To do this, from the Works of our dead Authors only, carry'd the Face of a *Meanness*, I could not tell how to submit to.—To draw formal Citations from any Pieces that had appear'd of my own (tho' full enough, God knows, of Absurdities, to have furnish'd more Proofs than I wanted), would have look'd too assuming, and silly:—To borrow such Instances out of other, less faulty, Contemporaries, not however reputed among the sparkling great Luminaries of Wit, would have induc'd a mistaken Conclusion, that, in the Works of more masterly Writers, there were no such *Examples* to be met with.—And now,—Is there a good Judge in *England* (except one) who will not see, and acknowledge, the Necessity that threw me, unavoidably, upon *your* Writings?

However, I am glad, at my Heart, it was Dr. A——t who made that Collection you mention; for I am almost unwilling to be found in the *Right*, when I disapprove what *your* Name has been stamp'd on; yet your own honest Argument (that it is not enough to excuse a Reporter of Falshoods, that he was told, and believ'd, what he publish'd) must defend me against its Advancer: For neither is it a sufficient Excuse, that a *Writer*, whose Name, in the Front of

a Book, has given Weight to the Censures it propagates, was not *Author* of some of those Censures; since whatever a Man sets his *Hand* to, he ought, first, to examine the *Truth* of.

I am charm'd, while I hear you disclaim that Propensity to *Pique* and *Contempt*, which, to speak with the Soul of a Friend, seems, to me, the only *Spot* on your Character.—We are, All of us, in some Lights, or other, the *Dupes* of our natural Frailties: And when Mr. *Pope*, with the Warmth that becomes a great Mind, tells me how far he is from despising Defects in Men's *Genius*,—never feeling any Contempt but for the Dirt of their *Actions*; I am sure he says nothing but what he firmly believes to be true. And yet there are Pieces, well known to be *his*, many Passages whereof no Man, less appris'd than himself of his Heart's secret Views and Intentions, can read, without being strongly convinc'd of a Scorn, that regards *Genius* only: Tho', if he loves you but half so sincerely as I do, you have no sooner disavow'd the Design, than he concludes, the Imputation was groundless.

In the mean Time, 'tis Pity that a Thinker, so humane and benevolent, should indulge an Ambiguity, in the Turn of his Expression, that scatters Gall, which his Heart never licens'd; since I believe it a general Truth, that Men, of the openest and honestest Natures, sooner catch Fire at *Contempt*, than *Oppression*.—And, as to any *Dirtiness* in Actions which take Birth from Effect of such Influence, we may conclude, from those irresistible little Sallies of *Fury*, whereby, even among undesigning and innocent Infants, we see *Brother* precipitated into Outrage against *Brother*, immediately upon any cold Provocation of *Scorn*, that there is nothing *immoral* in what may be done, or declar'd, too offensively, under Impressions so violent, so involuntary, and natural.

After all this grave Face of Apology, I am an absolute Stranger to the *Grounds* upon which those Men, you refer to, proceeded.—Nay, I am so, for the most part, even to the *Measures* by which they provok'd you: All the Reason, indeed, that I have for giving you any of *my* Thoughts on the Subject, is deriv'd from your own starting into it (a little digressively) immediately after hinting some Occasions you had to lament, that I knew you less justly, as a *Man*, than a *Poet*.—I will appeal to impartial Posterity, whether I do not know you much better, in both Lights, than ten thousand of those pretending *Esteemers*, of whose Affection you think yourself surer. It will never be in my *Will*, nor my *Power*, to transmit such a *Picture*, as yours, without its best, and most beautiful *Likeness*: I shall leave to duller *Dutch* Painters in Criticism, their unenvied Delight, to draw *Monsters*. And know very well, for my own Part, that I should but *disgrace* the desir'd Reputation of my *Pencil*, if I mis'd the *Resemblance*, too widely, in a Piece which must expect to be compar'd with Originals of the same, by many different *Masters*.

Tho' I acquit you of any further Allusion to *me*, than by that retrospect Glance, *en passant*, I have, *affectionately*, caught the Occasion of pointing out, to one of the least intentionally guilty among Men, a seeming *Tartness* of Spirit in himself, which he will easily *find*, when he looks for; and which, whenever he does find, and guard against, by submitting his *Wit* to his *Philosophy*, he will become the most *unnatural* good Man in the World; for he will leave himself not a *Fault*, to be blam'd for!

As to myself, who was born to mix Sin with Repentance, I plead guilty to all such Indictments as you, in that Place, *present* to my Memory.—I was always too perceptibly quick, in my Apprehension of *Contempts*, or *Indignities*:—A Temper, which would have been as *unpardonable*, as I confess it to be *weak*,
and

and *self-mortifying*; but that the Fault, tho' of too swelling a Nature, leaves no Voids for Admission of *Malice*.—It is an offensive, indeed, but reconcileable Imbecillity of Mind: *Shakespeare* felt, and understood it, very finely.

“ It carries *Anger*, as the Flint does *Fire*!

“ Which, being struck, throws out a hasty *Spark*,

“ And then, grows cold again.—”

Yet I will endeavour to redress this wrong Bent in my Temper, and make Way for the Rectification you are so good as to shew me my WANT OF.—And thus, in the Commerce of *Friendship*, as in Traffick, less generous, there is offer'd a mutual Exchange of Advantages:—Something, always, to *give* and to *gain*: And this makes *both Sides* more rich, and more satisfy'd.—What a Loss, then, have unsocial and vain Dispositions, which, by a fullen Seclusion from these Rights of Reproof, and Plain-dealing, cut off all the kind Use of Correction!—*Human Nature*, let it be as susceptible of *Grace* as it can, never yet wanted *Pride* enough to make Mortifications, of this Kind, a *Requisite*. Far from hating our *Friends* for a little faithful, tho' unwelcome, *Asperity*, let us think *him*, of all Men, *unhappiest*, who has never been bless'd with an *Enemy*.

And now, let me ask you (with a Transition very fashionably abrupt and uncritical)—How is your good and great Friend, Lord *B*——, to be reach'd?—You will scarce think I mean,—to be *emulated*! Ours is an Age that exposes such an old-fashion'd Politician, as HE is, to any *Fear*, sooner than that of a *Rival*. I have a Packet to send him, a little too large for the *Post*. It is a manuscript Piece, which I purpose to *dedicate* to him, when publish'd. But it would be Prudence, and Decency, as Affairs stand at present, to wait his Permission, after reading it: Not that there is any thing nice, or exceptionable, in the

Subject; and, I am sure, I have no need to add, tho' I speak of a *Dedication*, that mine has no *Views* like a *modern* one. If you will be so kind as to think how it may reach my Lord's Hands, I shall, in a few Days, send it open, to yours; begging you, first, to peruse, and then give it a Seal, and a Forwarding. If you will have the Goodness to authorize such a Trouble, please to do it under a Direction, like your last, to

S I R,
Your most humble
and affectionate Servant,
A. HILL.

LETTER XXXV.

From Mr. HILL, To Mr. POPE.

S I R,

June 25. 1738.

IT is Time to relieve you from Subjects, and Lengths, like my last; yet you will hardly suspect such a Blindness, in my bad Understanding, as to think, I distinguish not the true *Cast* of some Colours which you need not have held quite so near me.—Notwithstanding all which, if I had not more Cause to distrust it, on *your* Side, than my *own*, I should flatter myself, we were born to be *Lovers*; we are so often, and so unaccountably, mistaking one another into *Reserves*, and *Resentments*! Yet I am sorry, whenever this happens, because the most *lost* Time, in Mens Lives, is *that* which they waste in *Expostulation*. They, who are *Friends*, find it *selfish*, and *diffident*—and between *Enemies* 'tis *inflaming*, and *fruitless*.

Indeed there would be no End of such—what must I call 'em?—*Eclaircissements* is an affected *French* Word, and I am heartily sorry I *want* it.—In plain *Truth*, and *English*, I always did, and I still do, most affectionately *esteem* you, both as *Man*, and as *Poet*: And if now-and-then, for a Start, I have been put out

out of Humour with *either*, I would fain have you think, it was no less your *own* Fault, than *mine*: At least, I am sure, I believ'd so. And if, whenever you suppos'd me to have acted inconsistently with myself, on that Principle, you had only been so kind, as to have declar'd *why* you thought so, I would openly, and immediately, either have demonstrated the *Mistake* to be *yours*, or confess'd, and abhorr'd, my *own Error*.—I will always stand *bound* to give, if not a *rational*, yet a *moral*, Account of my *Actions*: Not alone, as they regard Mr. *Pope*, but *Men*, in the remotest Situation below him: And whoever (let him be accus'd, either by Misapprehension or Calumny) would *decline* such a *Test* of his *Conduct* in *Life*, is so far from being worthy your *Friendship*, that he is a *Stranger* to both *Spirit* and *Honesty*.

Here, then, let us *rest* this Debate; and either resolve to let *fall* an unconfiding, and cold Correspondence, or much rather agree (if you please) to understand one another *better*, for the future.—As to my own Part, I never *will*—I never *did*—disoblige you, *unprovok'd*. And if, how unkindly soever impell'd, I write or do any thing unbecoming the Occasion—Think of me, as I would of your Enemies.

In the mean time, let even the little Trouble, you have so kindly allow'd me to give you, in the Inclos'd, be receiv'd as some Proof that I know, and respect, at my Heart, your double Claim, both in *Morals* and *Genius*. For you know *me*, I am sure, much less justly, if you can imagine me capable of corresponding, with an Air of *Good-will*, where I wanted a *personal Attachment*; or of begging, as I now very earnestly do (upon *any* Inducement, but the high Sense I have of your *Skill*), your frank and friendly *Inspection of the Tragedy*. It would charm me, to have the Benefit of your Hand, or your Hints, before it appears on the *Theatre*.

As to my *Essay on Propriety*, you have obligingly convinc'd me, I may lay it before you, without Pain : Indeed, if I had made it unfit for *your Eye*, the *World* would have been still less likely to see it : I shall punctually obey your Command, neither to *omit*, nor to *soften*, in the Transcript : It is an Injunction I may safely comply with, since, if I have any thing to value myself upon in this Tract, it is from the Proofs, you will find it abound in, that some of your most retir'd, and most delicate Touches, have been, chiefly, the *Search* and the *Subject* of,

S I R,

Your truly affectionate, and

most humble Servant,

A. HILL.

L E T.

L E T T E R XXXVI.

From Mr. THOMSON, To AARON HILL, Esq;

S I R,

April 5. 1726.

HAVING seen a Letter you wrote to my Friend Mr. *Mallet*, on *Saturday* last, tho' I cannot boast the Honour and Happiness of your Acquaintance, and ought with the utmost Deference and Veneration to approach so supreme a Genius; yet my full Heart is not to be repress'd by Formalities; and you must allow me the Pleasure of pouring forth my best Acknowledgments.

I will not affect a moderate Joy at your Approbation, your Praise: It pleases, it delights, it ravishes me! Forgive me for the Lowness of the Truth, when I vow, I'd rather have it than the Acclamations of Thousands: 'Tis so sincere, so delicate, so distinguishing, so glowing, and, what peculiarly marks and endears it, so beautifully generous.

That great Mind, and transcendent Humanity, that appear in the Testimony you have been pleas'd to give my first Attempt, would have utterly confounded me, if I had not been prepar'd for such an Entertainment, by your well-known Character; which the Voice of Fame, and your own masterly Writings, loudly proclaim.

It would both be disingenuous, and rudely unjust, in me, after what you have observ'd, to dissemble my Satisfaction at several Passages in the Poem: This let me say, that your Reflections have enter'd into the very Soul of my Purpose, and, even to myself, cast a Light over the Whole.

How rare, how happy, is it to find a Judge whose discerning Goodness overlooks the Faults of what is
well

well meant, at the same Time that his fine enthusiastic Taste improves the Beauties!

To you, alone, it belongs, to write so inimitably, and to read so indulgently.

If I wrote all that my Admiration of your Perfections, and my Gratitude, dictate, I should never have done; but, lest I tire you, I'll for the present rather put a Violence on myself: Only let me cherish one Hope further—of being, some time or other, admitted into the most instructive and entertaining Company in the World. I am, with the greatest Devotion,

S I R,
Your most oblig'd,
and most faithful,
humble Servant,

JAMES THOMSON.

LETTER XXXVII.

From Mr. THOMSON, To AARON HILL, Esq;

S I R,

April 18. 1726.

I Receiv'd yours with a Soul awaken'd all to Joy, Gratitude, and Ambition. There is such a noble Excellence of Mind, so much uncommon Goodness, and Generosity of Heart, in every thing you say, as at once charms and astonishes me.

As you think, imagine, and write, with a diviner Warmth, superior to the rest of Mankind; so the very Praises, you bestow, bear the Stamp of Eminence, and reflect stronger on yourself.

While I meditate your encouraging Lines, for a while, I forget the Selfishness, Degeneracy, and Cruelty of Men, and seem to be associated with better and more exalted Beings.

The *Social Love*, of which you are so bright an Example, tho' it be the distinguishing Ornament of Humanity, yet there are some ill-natur'd enough to degrade

degrade it into a Modification of Self-love, according to them, its Original.

Those Gentlemen, I am afraid, mingle their Tempers too much with their Speculations.

Self-love is, indeed, indispensably necessary for the Well-being of every Individual, but carries not along with it an Idea of moral Beauty and Perfection; whereas Social Love is of quite another Nature; the just and free Exercise of which, in a particular manner, renders one amiable, and divine. The accomplish'd Man I admire, the honest Man I trust; but 'tis only the truly-generous Man I intirely love. Humanity is the very Smile and Consummation of Virtue; 'tis the Image of that fair Perfection, in the Supreme Being, which, while he was infinitely happy in himself, mov'd him to create a World of Beings to make them so.

The Excellent ones of the Earth, in the Exercise of Social Love, feel it as much to be an original Impulse, as the low World that blind Affection, they bear themselves; nor are they, in the least, conscious of that forc'd, cold Reasoning, by which it is deduc'd from so mean an Original.

How many deathless Heroes, Patriots, and Martyrs, have been so gloriously concern'd for the Good of Mankind, and so strongly actuated by Social Love, as frequently to act in direct Contradiction to that of Self?

A great many more Arguments might be adduced to prove, that Social Love is a nobler, independent Principle, by itself, were not the secret Sense, that every good Man has of the Matter, instead of a thousand.

Your Writings, while they glow with innumerable Instances of strong Thinking, and sublime Imagination, are peculiarly mark'd with this beautiful Benevolence of Mind; and 'tis that which, at this time, has awaken'd, in me, these Reflections.

I am

I am ravish'd with the Hope, you give me, of your nearer Acquaintance; and that it should ever prove unprofitable, is as impossible, as that it should not be, in the highest Degree, delightful to,

S I R,

*Your most obliged
and most faithful,
humble Servant,*

JAMES THOMSON.

LETTER XXXVIII.

From Mr. THOMSON, To AARON HILL, Esq;

S I R,

April 27. 1726.

WHEN I reflect how truly happy I was, Yesterday, in your Company, it is impossible for me to restrain my Sense of it, from breaking out into this Acknowledgment.

There is, in your Conversation, such a Beauty, Truth, Force, and Elegance of Thought, and Expression; such animated, fine Sense, and chastis'd Fancy; so much Dignity and Condescension, Sublimity and Sweetness; in a Word, such a Variety of Entertainment and Instruction, as is beyond all Admiration.

Your Smiles have all the encouraging Power of Humanity in them: What one says, is receiv'd with great Taste, and Indulgence; and to listen to you, gives one a secret, and more ravishing Pleasure, than to be Author of the best Things in other Company.

There is downright Inspiration in your Society: It enlarges and exalts all the Powers of the Soul, chases every low Thought, throws the Passions into the most agreeable Agitations, and gives the Heart the most affecting Sentiments—'Tis moral Harmony!

It gives me an additional Pleasure, to reflect how justly pleas'd, too, Mr. *Savage* was.

Nothing

Nothing is, to me, a stronger Instance of the unimprovable Nature of that unhappy Creature of whom you speak so compassionately, notwithstanding of the barbarous Provocation he has given you, than his remaining bleak, and wither'd, under the Influences of your Conversation—a certain Sign of a Field that the Lord has curs'd.

There is none that renders human Nature more amiable than you; and, at the same time, none that renders the greatest Part of it more contemptible: And to descend from your Company, and mingle with the Herd of Mankind, is like *Nebuchadnezzar's* descending from a Throne, to graze with the Beasts of the Field.

Now I feast on Reflection—and am like a poor Man, that has brought as much from a rich Entertainment with him, as must sustain him for many Days afterwards.

What charms and amuses me, in a particular Manner, is, the Account you gave us of that little Seraph, the young *Urania*! Her elegant Turn of Mind; her Innocence, and Goodness, in the Choice of her Subjects; her Fancy, Judgment, and Ambition, above her Years; and the beautiful Struggle of the last ('tis unfair to call it Vanity), occasion'd by the rude Stupidity of the *School-Boy*, are most agreeably surprising.

What you, obligingly, observ'd of good Company's being *Ariosto's* Fountain of Thirst, is remarkably true of yours—I shall long impatiently for the farther Refreshment of it, and am, with the most intire Regard,

Dear Sir,
Your most oblig'd,
and most faithful,
humble Servant,
JAMES THOMSON.

L E T-

L E T T E R XXXIX.

From Mr. THOMSON, To AARON HILL, Esq;

Dear Sir,

Oldman's Coffee-house, May 24. 1726.

I HOPE that your uncommon Goodness will forgive me, what I scarcely can forgive myself, my not having, hitherto, answer'd the last encouraging Letter, and Copy of Verses, you honour'd me with.

The Approbation which, out of the Fulness of a beneficent Heart, you are pleas'd to give me, I am fond and ambitious of, next to that of *Heaven*: 'Tis my best Reward for what I have done, and a noble Incitement to go on. When *you* approve, my whole Soul is awak'd, and charm'd.

Pleasing is your Praise, but severe is your Satire: 'Tis particularly mark'd with exalted Sentiment, and generous Contempt. There is a Force in it, that strikes thro' the Heart; and a Majesty, not to be express'd. In a Word, it is the unaffected Resentment of a great Mind.

It is impossible for me, in the Compass of this Letter, to say how much I admire every particular Line; yet 'tis as impossible for me to restrain myself from dwelling on some.

“ Smile at your vanish'd Hope—convinc'd, too
“ late,

“ That Greatness dwells not, always, with the
“ Great.”

I feel the first Line, too sensibly; and the last finely insinuates the Absurdity of vulgar and hereditary Greatness.

Your sinking of the Lord's unlasting Name in the Depth of Time, is pleasingly and nobly just: Sir *John Falstaff* sunk not with greater Alacrity, in a literal Sense, than they and all their Fopperies do in a metaphorical;

I never read any thing more glorious, than the four following Lines.

- “ Patrons are *Nature's* Nobles, not the *State's*;
 “ And Wit's a Title, no *Broad Seal* creates.
 “ Kings, from whose Bounty Wealth's chief Cur-
 “ rents flow,
 “ Are *poor* in Pow'r, when they would *Souls*
 “ bestow.

They are the most divine Triumph of Merit, and Virtue, that was ever writ. The best way of displaying all their Beauties is, to read them a thousand and a thousand Times over.

Your Description of the Court-haunting, Wink-observing Bard, is so natural, that, if I am not mistaken, it may be found a Picture of some living Originals.

The last Paragraph is very strongly and delicately wrought off; but so favourable to me, as obliges me to suppress all Sentiments, save such as flow from Gratitude; with which my Heart is as full, as yours is with Goodness and Perfection.

You have given me *Fame*; and what have I to return you, but the Acknowledgment of a grateful Soul?

How powerfully was I charm'd with the four Acts of *Elfrid*, you were so condescendingly good as to read us! There is in them such a rich Assemblage of all the Excellencies of the best Poetry, as is not anywhere to be found. I never met, before, with such a Force, and Dignity of Passion. My Heart trembles, yet, when I reflect. But I will not cramp my Admiration into the small Space this Letter allows.

Mr. *Mallet* is now gone into the Country, where he justly expects to be vastly entertain'd, and instructed, by your Correspondence. I have been somewhat melancholy since his Departure, touch'd with

these pensive Emotions, parting with such a Friend gives.

*Bounteous Creator of the tender Heart !
Is there no World, where Friends shall never part ?
Be that our future Lot, and of such Bliss
Grant us an Earnest, ere we die, in this.*

I go, on *Saturday* next, to reside at *Mr. Watts's* Academy in *Little Tower-street*, in Quality of Tutor to a young Gentleman there.

Since you have been pleas'd to raise me, in some measure, to the new Life of your Favour, let me never fall from it, but frequently be allow'd the Honour of subscribing myself, dear Sir,

*Your most obliged,
and most devoted,
humble Servant,*

JAMES THOMSON.

LETTER XL.

From Mr. THOMSON, To AARON HILL, Esq;

S I R,

June 4. 1726.

MR. *Bowman*, and I, are at *Long's Coffee-house*, in *Queen's Square, Westminster*; and, if it be consistent with your Conveniency, would be glad to attend the Honour, and Happiness, of your Company, as you shall be pleas'd to direct. *Mr. Mallet* left with me, what they call a *Spanish Cheese*, which he begs you to accept of. At last, I have been with the Speaker, this Morning; but would rather give you an Account of my Reception by Word of Mouth. We beg Pardon for this Freedom, which the delightful Prospect of your Company irresistibly tempts us to. I am, Sir, with the deepest Respect,

*Your most obliged,
and most devoted,
humble Servant,*

JAMES THOMSON.

LETTER XLI.

From Mr. THOMSON, To AARON HILL, Esq;

Dear Sir,

June 7. 1726.

ENCourag'd by that most divine of all Virtues, your charming Goodness, I frequently, you see, take the Liberty to address you.

On *Saturday* last I wrote to you, from a Coffee-house in *Westminster*, but had the Misfortune to hear you were gone out, only Half an Hour, before the Letter was sent.

Flattering myself, then, with some Hopes of your Company, I did not mention a Copy of Verses I receiv'd, on *Friday* last, from Mr. Mallet, to be prefix'd to the Second Edition of *Winter*; and which I send you inclos'd. That you should read them, was his particular Desire, in the following Terms:—

“ Offer my Verses to Mr. Hill's Perusal, and tell him, that I will not determine their Fate, till I first learn his Opinion of them : For I know him too nobly sincere, to indulge my Vanity, at the Expence of your Credit. Say, likewise, that I will shortly venture to make use of that Permission he so generously granted me, of writing to him, as often as my Fear of becoming troublesome will let me.”—

All that I shall observe concerning them, to such a finish'd Judge as you are, is, that their only glorious Fault, if they have any, is, an Excess of that beautiful Benevolence of Mind, which, among a thousand other Things, make you and him so greatly amiable.

I hinted to you in my last, that, on *Saturday* Morning, I was with Sir *Spencer Compton*. A certain Gentleman, without my Desire, spoke to him concerning me; his Answer was, that I had never come near him : Then the Gentleman put the Question, if he desir'd that I should wait on him; he return'd, he

did: On this, the Gentleman gave me an introductory Letter to him. He receiv'd me in what they commonly call a civil Manner, ask'd me some Common-place Questions, and made me a Present of Twenty Guineas. I am very ready to own, that the Present was larger than my Performance deserv'd; and shall ascribe it to his Generosity, or any other Cause, rather than the Merit of the Address.

As the Case now is, one of your infinite Delicacy will be the best Judge, whether it will be proper to print these two inimitable Copies of Verses I have from you, and Mr. *Mallet*, without such little Alterations as shall clear Sir *Spencer* of that best Satire I ever read. I shall say no more on that Head; for if there be any Reasons for such Alterations, you will, of Necessity, at one Glance, see them in the strongest and finest Light. Only this let me add, should you find that the Case requir'd some small Alterations, and yet not indulge me with them, I shall reckon what my Patron gave me, a fatal Present.—'Tis a Thought too shocking to be born—to lose the Applause of the great Genius of the Age, my Charter of Fame! for—I will not name it!—But you are too good to plague me so severely.—I expect this Favour from Mr. *Mallet*, next Post.

When you honour me with an Answer, for which I shall be anxious, please to direct for me at Mr. *Watts's Academy*, in *Little Tower-street*. I am, dear Sir, with the most hearty Respect,

Your most devoted,

and most humble Servant,

JAMES THOMSON.

LET-

L E T T E R XLII.

From Mr. THOMSON, To AARON HILL, Esq;

Dear Sir, London, June 11. 1726.

I HAVE been, for some Days last past, in the Country, else the inclos'd Sheets, to which you yourself have given the greatest Sanction and Value, should have waited on you ere now.

It was your Approbation that gave me, formerly, an equally just and noble Satisfaction; and the Continuance of it is my inviolable Ambition.

Since I put you to the Trouble of altering your Verses, I ought to give you an Account why Mr. Mallet's were not alter'd, likewise.—The Truth is, he promis'd me to alter them, as I wrote to you; but, in a following Letter, told me, that, after several Attempts, he found it absolutely out of his Power; and, rather than lose them, I resolv'd to print them, as they at first were. To this Resolution your last favourable Letter, in'a great measure, rais'd me: And who, that has a Soul in him, could forbear to follow the Advice you give me, in those generous Lines?

*Heedless of Fortune, then look down on State,
Balanc'd, within, by Reason's conscious Weight:
Divinely proud of independent Will,
Prince of your Passions, live their Sov'reign still.*

I wish, that the Declaration, from my Heart, with regard to you, in the Preface, may not be disagreeable. These Sentiments I could not suppress; and they are but a faint Expression of the full Esteem and Admiration, I shall ever bear you.

May I hope that one of the inclos'd Copies of my Poem can be acceptable to a Lady of Mrs. Hill's fine Taste, and the young Darling of the Muses, Urania,

who, in such a tender Age, has encounter'd with all the Horrors of so rough a Description?

Shall I languish out a whole Summer, in the same City with you, and not once be re-inspir'd with your Company? Such a Happiness would much brighten my Description of that Season; from which, to fill out this Letter, I venture to transcribe the following Lines.

*Oft in this Season, too, the Horse, provok'd,
While his big Sinews, full of Spirits, swell,
Trembling with Vigour, in the Heat of Blood,
Springs the high Fence; and o'er the Field effus'd,
Darts on the gloomy Flood, with steady Eye,
And Heart estrang'd to Fear; his nervous Chest,
The Seat of Strength! bears down th' opposing Stream,
Luxuriant, and arrect: Quenchless his Thirst,
He takes the River, at redoubled Draughts,
And, with wide Nostrils, snorting, skims the Wave.*

In your last you were pleas'd to threaten me, as you term it, with a long Letter. I beg you would be as exact, in the Execution of your Threatenings, as you always are, in the Performance of your Promises; which shall be submitted to, with the most chearful Resignation, by him who is, dear Sir, with the utmost Devotion,

*Your most obliged,
and most obedient,
humble Servant,
JAMES THOMSON.*

L E T T E R XLIII.

From Mr. THOMSON, To AARON HILL, Esq;

S I R,

London, June 17. 1726.

I HAD the inclos'd for you, from Mr. Mallet, this Day, which emboldens me to give you the present Trouble.

He

He is so good as to promise me another Copy of Verses, next Post, which gives me a very great Pleasure: But my Satisfaction is far from being complete, so long as I am uncertain of the like Favour from you. Perhaps my Forwardness, if not Vanity, presumes too much on your Goodness; but your already wondrous Generosity, in this Regard, has rais'd in me an Expectation and Ambition you ought, in all poetical Justice, to satisfy. If you knew the Gladness it would inspire into my Heart, you would, certainly, steal a kind Hour from your more important Affairs, to smile upon my, I will not scruple to say, reasonable Fondness.—But by being importunate, I shall offer an Injury to your ever-ready Humanity.

All that I shall further add is, that on *Monday* next the Poem will be printed off. I am, Sir, with the utmost Gratitude and Regard,

Your most devoted,

humble Servant,

JAMES THOMSON.

P. S. The Press, if you please, shall wait your Leisure.

LETTER XLIV.

From Mr. THOMSON, To AARON HILL, Esq;

Dear Sir,

London, Oct. 20. 1726.

MR. Savage was so kind as to shew me a Letter you lately favour'd him with, by which I had the true Pleasure of learning your safe Arrival at *Berwick*, intended Tour, and Halt at *Inverness*.

It is with a Mixture of Joy, Pride, and Confusion, I read the favourable Mention you were pleas'd to make of me: What unusual good Fortune has thus intitled me to your kind Regard? 'Tis nothing, sure, but your own generous Goodness, which, with your other many matchless Perfections, shall ever be my
Love,

Love, and Wonder, while Truth and Harmony are the Objects of these Passions.

Every Muse, every Virtue, here, languishes for your Return: To me your Absence would be much feverer, if my partial Sympathy in the Happiness of my native Country did not alleviate the Misfortune. I congratulate her on the Presence of such a kind Inspirer, and candid Observer: *There*, you may chance to find, in that neglected Corner of the World, depress'd Merit, uninform'd Beauty, and good Sense cloath'd in the Rags of Language.

Nothing has appear'd in Print here, since your Departure, unless it be some mushroomish Pamphlets, Beings of a Summer's Night! whose only Merit is the violent Propension with which they tend into Oblivion. Memory abhors them, and their Essence is, to die. I beg Mr. *Pope's* Pardon, some of whose Letters, to Mr. *Cromwell*, were surreptitiously printed by *Curll*; and yet, tho' writ careless, and uncorrected, full of Wit and Gaiety.

We have got, O rare! a *Rostrum*, and an Orator, since you left us; an Orator! whose pretended great Design is to restore primitive Christianity; and his hopeful Candidates are all the Beaus, and pretty powder'd Fellows about Town.

You were, a Week or two ago, traduc'd by the Praises of one of our Journalists, who can no more understand the Beauties of your Writings, than you write to his Understanding.

A new Torrent of *Italian* Farces is lately pour'd in upon us. The Advertisement, which just now lies before me, and begins thus—"By his Majesty's Command, at the King's Theatre in the Hay-market, To-morrow, being *Friday* the 21st of "*October*, will be acted, by the Company of *Italian* Comedians newly arriv'd, a Comedy call'd *The Inchant'd Island of Arcadia*, or *Arlequin King of the Forests*, &c." is such a Maze of incredible Imper-

tinence,

tinence, and promises so much Folly, that it is to be presum'd the House will be very full, and that, too, with Persons of the first Quality.

May you soon return to Town, resume the *Plain-dealer*, and, if we are not devoted to Destruction, restore the great dramatic Taste by that Tragedy, Part of which I had the Honour and sublime Pleasure of hearing read, by the finest Reader, as well as the finest Author, in *England*.

If your Business will allow me one Line, please to direct for me at the Academy in *Little Tower-street*. I am,

Dear Sir,
Your most obliged,
faithful humble Servant,
JAMES THOMSON.

LETTER XLV.

From Mr. THOMSON, To AARON HILL, Esq;

Oldman's Coffee-house, Monday
[Morn. Mar. 4. 1726-7.]

Dear Sir,

THE News of your safe Arrival in Town gave me a Joy, I have not felt, since the Receipt of your most agreeable Letter from the North of *Scotland*. But while I have not the Honour of seeing you, *Westminster* is at a more gloomy Distance, than *Skor-urran's* snowy Top.

Mr. *Mallet* and I, wish, with the fondest Impatience, the Happiness of your Company; which, if we may hope this Afternoon, we'll wait upon you, as you shall please to appoint, by a short Line with the Bearer. I will not make any Apology for this Freedom to one of your unbounded Goodness. I am, with the most inviolable Regard,

Dear Sir,
Your devoted humble Servant,
JAMES THOMSON.

LETTER XLVI.

From Mr. THOMSON, To AARON HILL, Esq;

Dear Sir,

Tuesday, Dec. 18. 1733.

I HAVE been almost intirely in the Country, since I had the Honour of yours, and of the inclos'd Papers, you were so good, as to send me. The two or three Days since my Return to Town have been rather hurry'd than employ'd in soliciting for the Benefit of old *Dennis*. Your well-known and formerly-experienc'd Goodness will, I hope, forgive me for having been so selfish as to keep your Papers so long. Tho' I would have had some Objections to your undertaking the Translation of *Zaire*; now that it is so affectingly done, I should be very ungrateful, for the great Pleasure it has given me, to think of them any more. In reading of *Zara*, I forget what it was that I objected to *Zaire*. You have heighten'd it with mere Imagination, but such a chastis'd one, as accords perfectly well with the nobler Fervency of the Heart. The Sentiments and Reflections, too, rise in the Translation, and glow stronger, as well as the Touches of the poetical Pencil. Allow me to say, that, in these Respects, I deeply feel the Difference betwixt Mr. *Voltaire* and Mr. *Hill*. The more generous Warmth of your Heart more animates the Scene, raises the dear Tumult in the Breast, and moves me much more. I observ'd nothing that I wish'd alter'd but a Word here and there, which are mere Trifles, and not worth Regard. One, however, I will take the Liberty to mention: It is in a Speech of the first Scene, which marks the Civility and Gallantry of *France*—"Where Men adore *their Wives*"—The two last Words I would change into—*the Fair*.—I imagine you smiling at my important Criticism, and ready to reply—that tho' the present *French* are not famous
for

for adoring their Wives, yet those in the good old unrefin'd Days of *St. Lewis* might. If they do not now adore their Wives, they perhaps do better, they make them easy.

I shall long to renew the Pleasure your Play has given me at its Representation. What Attention I can contribute to the promoting of that, will greatly be its own Reward. Mr. *Dodington* is expected, in a few Days, from *Ireland*: He, I dare say, will warmly favour it, from a double Cause—both the Love of the fine Arts, and his own Pleasure. Had you but Players equal to those *Voltaire* had, I would not doubt, in this Instance, the Taste of our Countrymen—Almighty Nature is every-where the same.

Soon I propose to fix in Town for the Winter, during which time I hope to pass several happy Evenings in your Company: Mr. *Pope* earnestly wishes the same. Believe me to be, most affectionately and sincerely,

Dear Sir,
Yours, &c.

J. THOMSON.

LETTER XLVII

From Mr. THOMSON, To AARON HILL, Esq;

Dear Sir,

Aug. 23. 1735.

UPON my Return to Town, from Mr. *Dodington's* Seat in *Dorsetshire*, where I had for some time been, I found your Letter, about a Month after its Date: Had it been sent me in the Country, I could not have neglected, till now, acknowledging the Pleasure it, and the Packet of Prompters you sent along with it, gave me. Tho' very happy in the Company where I then was, yet cannot I help sincerely regretting the Loss of that Entertainment to which you was so good as to give me an Invitation. With the greatest Pleasure would I have beheld, and with

with the greatest Zeal would I have countenanc'd, to the utmost of my little Power, the Revival of *Action*, which seems on all our Theatres to be now both dead and rotten. A Friend of mine, who was there, did not, by what he told me, soften my Loss.

I was very much enlighten'd and warm'd by the Prompters upon *Action*: They present no less a strong and beautiful Idea of what *Actors* ought to be, than a mortifying one of what they are. As the Stage is a powerful School of humane polite Morality, so nothing can contribute more to barbarize the Age than the present Condition of ours. There, human Nature is represented in as awkward, false, and monstrous a Manner, as the human Form was in antient *Gothic* Sculpture and Painting. If that were all, it might be laugh'd at, and contemn'd: But since it tends, at the same time, to confound the Head, and corrupt the Heart; since Crouds grow stupid, or barbarous, as they gaze; who can consider it in that View, without feeling an honest Indignation? And what crowns the Misfortune is, that there is no Hope of its ever being otherwise: The Root of the Evil lies too deep to be pluck'd up. Was there ever an equal Absurdity heard of, among a civiliz'd People? That such an important public Diversion, the School which forms the Manners of the Age, should be made the Property of private Persons; who, did they happen in the first Instance, by an infinite Chance, to be Judges of the Matter, yet may transfer that Property to the most profligate, tasteless, and ignorant of Mankind! But this, alas! is only one of the Pillars of that vast Temple of *Corruption*, under which this Generation, more than any other that ever boasted Freedom, worships the dirty, low-minded, insatiable Idol of Self-interest. Even to this Idol is every public Work, which we have the Soul to attempt, made an immediate Sacrifice.—You see how much your *Prompters* have inflam'd me; and the

melancholy Conclusion I draw from all is, that I never hope to see Gentlemen of equal Genius, Taste, Judgment, and Generosity of Heart, to the Author of these Prompters, at the Head of our Theatres. I may, however, very well live to see all Poetry reduced to Magazine-Miscellanies, all Plays to Mummery Entertainments, and, in short, all Learning absorb'd into the Sink of hireling scurrilous Newspapers. Pardon this Supposition in a Letter to one, who, while he lves, will never suffer it wholly to take Place: In the mean time, go on to stem the Torrent of Barbarism. I wish you could find an Assistant, tho' never so weak a one, in,

Dear Sir,

Your most affectionate

humble Servant,

JAMES THOMSON.

LETTER XLVIII.

From Mr. THOMSON, To AARON HILL, Esq;

Dear Sir,

May 11. 1736.

IT is far from being the want of a due Sense of the Honour, your two last Letters did me, that has prevented my thanking you for them before now: The Truth is, they plung'd me so deep into your Debt, that I was dispirited, thro' mere Despair, of clearing it. But now I am rather willing to declare myself an irrecoverable Bankrupt, than any longer neglect to acknowledge the refin'd Pleasure, which your generous Approbation of my late Performance gives me—I call it generous, that Epithet having a peculiar Relation to whatever you do; besides, I cannot help being afraid that it must, in a great measure, proceed from so humane a Cause. In the mean time, however that be, I will avow, that I am justly proud of, charm'd with, and most agreeably rewarded by, your good Opinion of my Poem. Allow me here,

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by

by the bye, to remark, that tho' Poets have been long us'd to this truly-spiritual and almost only Emolument arising from their Works; yet I doubt much, if Booksellers have any manner of Relish for it: I think, therefore (notwithstanding that the Ghosts of many Authors walk unreveng'd), of annulling the Bargain I made with mine, who would else be a considerable Loser, by the Paper, Printing, and Publication, of *Liberty*. As I shall, in this Case, be possess'd of the intire Property of it again, I propose, in a Year or two hence, to give a new Edition of it; and beg that you would, ere then, enrich me with some Criticisms, which I hope I shall have the Grace to relish as well as Praises.

Your Observation, with regard to political Corruption, like natural, when come to a Crisis, producing more exalted Scenes of Animation, is fine, and pleases by the future Prospect it opens; but it awakens, at the same time, a Sentiment no less mortifying, should we find our Lot cast in the Times of Putrefaction; should we find ourselves devoted, in an anti-heroic Manner, for the Good of Posterity. I wish, heartily, that I could refute what you likewise observe with regard to the Cause of this Corruption. Certainly the kind Exchanger of the Super-abundance for the Sweets and Elegancies of Life, is itself corrupted, and its Gifts abus'd, from the want of Taste: For whence is it, save the Want of Taste, that the continual Tides of Riches, pour'd in upon this Nation by Commerce, have been lost again in a Gulph of ungraceful, inelegant, inglorious Luxury? But whence, you will say, this want of Taste? Whence this sordid Turn to cautious Time-serving, Money-making, sneaking Prudence, instead of regardless, unfetter'd Virtue? To private Jobs, instead of public Works? To profitable, instead of fine Arts? To Gain, instead of Glory? In a Word, to the whole venal System of modern Administration? And to those

those gross perishing Luxuries, that reconcile, at once, Avarice and Profusion, centering all in Self, and even in the meanest, the material Part of Self. This Disquisition, I am afraid, would very near lead me back again to your Observation. It must be own'd, however, that the better Genius of this Nation has often nobly exerted itself, and will struggle hard before it expire. With regard to Arts and Learning, one may venture to say, that they might yet stand their Ground, were they but merely protected. In lieu of all Patrons that have been, are, or will be, in *England*, I wish we had one good Act of Parliament for securing to Authors the Property of their own Works; and that the Stage were put upon the Footing of common Sense and Humanity. And can it be, that those who impress Paper with what constitutes the best and everlasting Riches of all civiliz'd Nations, and of all Ages, should have less Property in the Paper, so enrich'd, than those who deal in the Rags, which make that Paper? Can it be, that the great, the delightful School of Manners, should be abandon'd to common Sale, and become the Property of any one, who can purchase it, to be, perhaps, the School of Folly, and Corruption?—A Simony this, in *Virtue*; which, if not so wicked, yet is as pernicious as that in *Religion*. What would *Athenians* have said to this! what Laughter, what Contempt, what Indignation, would it have rais'd among them!

Now that I mention the Stage, I must still insist upon my Copy of that only humane new Entertainment I have seen upon it of late. I know not what *Gothic Devil* possess'd the Maid at my Lodgings, but my few Books must not be so robb'd of the Honour of boasting *Zara* among them from its Author. Having been tantaliz'd lately by seeing you at a Distance, I wish you would be so good as to make me Amends some Evening, and let me know of it a few

Days before. Mr. *Pope* was the other Day inquiring kindly after you: I should be glad we could, at the same time, engage him. Poor Mr. *Savage* would be happy to pass an Evening with you; his Heart burns towards you with the eternal Fire of Gratitude: But how to find him, requires more Intelligence than is allotted to Mortals. Life is too short to lose Years without the Conversation of those one most loves, and esteems; one of which Number you must ever be to, dear Sir,

Your most affectionate

humble Servant,

JAMES THOMSON.

P. S. Please to direct to me in *Kew-Lane, Richmond, Surrey*; and order your Letter to be put into the General Post.

L E T T E R XLIX.

From Mr. THOMSON, To AARON HILL, Esq;

Dear Sir,

Friday Morning.

I AM sorry that my present Hurry cannot allow me Time to answer your kind and excellent Letter, in the Manner it deserves. The Freedom of your Criticism I love, and am more proud of your Approbation than it becomes me to say: In one the Taste of Fame is not more delicious, than that of Friendship in the other.

You, in the last Paragraph of your Letter, prescribe me a glorious Task; to perform which, would demand the same elegant and powerful Pen, that prescribed it. Only to attempt it is my Ambition.

Please to accept of the Second Part of my Poem, and believe me to be, with the most affectionate Esteem, dear Sir,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

JAMES THOMSON.

L E T-

L E T T E R L.

From Mr. BOOTH, To AARON HILL, Esq;

S I R,

Charles-street, Mar. 24. 1730.

'TIS plain, that Affairs of much greater Consequence have prevented your Inquiry about *York Stock*: I find now how much better you have employ'd your spare Hours—You have been attempting to make Mankind what they ought to be: The Advice you have lately given to such, who deserve the Names of Poet and Patron, is a sufficient Proof of that public Spirit, which ever *did* and ever *will* appear in all your Actions.—Give me Leave to thank you for the vast Delight I receiv'd in the Perusal of that daring Flight from the warm Indignation of your Mind—What an everlasting Reproach have you justly thrown upon those *Great ones*, whom Fortune has plac'd high above their Fellow-creatures, and, in some Sense, even above their Superiors!—A Panegyric would be a vain Attempt; the Poem itself can best speak its Praise.—I confess, I could not possibly resist the natural Impulse of expressing my Transport upon this great Occasion.—You *force* me to write to you, tho' Writing by no means agrees with my Distemper.—Your Time is precious.—Think, no Man living has a warmer Regard for the uncommon Qualities, that are peculiar to Mr. *Hill*, than,

S I R,

Your most obliged

and most humble Servant,

B. BOOTH.

LETTER LI.

From Mr. BOOTH, To AARON HILL, Esq;

S I R,

Monday Nov. 8. 1731.

I HAVE with infinite Pleasure finish'd the reading of your Tragedy : I don't wonder Mr. *Pope* should say, upon the Perusal of it, that no Play had ever *more warm'd* him. I wish we had a Set of Actors capable of doing it the Justice it deserves.

You were pleas'd to tell me, that you had Thoughts of my Wife for *Elfrid*; I was apprehensive, not having read it, that the Part might require great Force, and be too powerful for her Voice : But I find, 'tis neither long, nor violent; and, as our Company stands, I think, she might undertake it.

When I told her, you had been pleas'd to name her for it, she blam'd me for not letting her know it, that she might have thank'd you for your good Opinion of her. She now desires me to tell you, she is highly oblig'd to you, and if you still continue in that Opinion, she will do you all the Justice that lies in her Power.

Next time your Affairs bring you into *Covent-Garden*, I should be proud to kiss your Hands. I am,

S I R,

*Your most faithful,**and most obedient Servant,*

B. BOOTH.

LETTER LII.

From Mr. BOOTH, To AARON HILL, Esq;

S I R,

Sunday Morning.

I HAD answer'd yours last Night, but it came to my Hands as I was dressing, about Half an Hour before the Play began.

I confess I am under some Difficulty, how to account for the Failure of so good a Play. But notwithstanding its present Reception, I am positively, and absolutely of Opinion, that after it has slept some time, it will appear again upon the Stage, with a much better Grace, and continue in the Stock in the first Form of Tragedy for ever. My Reasons for this are, as follow :

If you please to remember, I hinted to you, that (as the Town has been lately led, and manag'd) there was a kind of Necessity to form and prepare a strong Body to support even its real Merit in the first Run of it ; and I have often thought the best Tragedy not supported by this necessary, scandalous Artifice, would naturally sink in five or six Days, at most : The Fate of *K. H.* has sufficiently confirm'd that Opinion.

However, tho' there is a good deal in what is above-mention'd, I take the main Cause of its Failure to proceed from what follows.

I find by some few Persons, who are highly pleas'd with that noble Simplicity, and Decency, that runs quite through the Play, that the Multitude in general look on it, not as a *new* Play, but as a Play *alter'd* from *Shakespear* : The many Beauties you have improv'd from him, and some noted Speeches, you have made use of with no very material Alterations (which was certainly well judg'd), have possess'd the gross Imaginations of the Audience, that most of the fine Passages of your own, are his too ; the two Speeches of *Justice*, and *Mercy*, at the Council-Table, and *Harry's* Reflection, when he first hears of the Treason, are universally mistaken for *Shakespear* : This I have found from some, whose Education, Understanding, and Acquaintance with *Shakespear*, I imagin'd, might have taught 'em better : And yet their knowing his Manner of Writing so well, perhaps, might the sooner lead 'em into the Mistake.

Add to this, that some Understrappers of *Parnassus*, and the Partizans of t'other House, have improv'd this Notion of its being a Play of *Shakefpear's* not *very much* alter'd. Now, Sir, allowing what I have observ'd above to be certainly the Game play'd upon *K. H.* I can no longer wonder, that his Success is little more, than what a good reviv'd Play commonly meets with.

Far be it from me to profane *K. H.* with odious Comparisons; but give me Leave to observe to you, that *C——r* once brought the *Double Gallant* upon the Stage, which was made up of Hints stolen from a Play of *Burnaby's*, and another of *Centlivre's*, both heartily damn'd the first Night, many Years before; as soon as the good-natur'd Town found him out, they resented his calling it a new Play, and hounded it in the most outrageous Manner. Two Years after we reviv'd it, it met with most extravagant Success, and it has continu'd in the Stock ever since, and never fails of a great Audience.

The *Kind Impostor*, tho' taken (I mean the Hints only) from a Translation of a *Spanish* Play acted about Thirty Years ago, was damn'd, at its first Appearance, only because it was call'd a new Play; but was reviv'd some time after, and met with universal Approbation, like the former, and is generally acted twice every Year.

King Lear, and *Timon of Athens*, met with the same Fate, from the same Reasons, at their first Appearance; but have both prov'd excellent Stock-Plays upon their being reviv'd.

Thus, if it can be artfully insinuated to the Town, that the Managers, or an Author, would pass an *alter'd* Play upon 'em for a *new* one, *That* alone would make 'em outrageous after three or four Days, and give the Multitude an Opportunity (which they never let slip) of exerting their proper Qualities. Audiences
are

are never guided by Reason, but always by Prepossession.

I believe, when you fairly consider what I have said to you, the present Disappointment will give you less Surprize. I assure you, the Play was more applauded the second Night, than the first; because it was infinitely better acted. As to my own Part, the Concern I was under for the Success of it, the first Night, threw me into the utmost Confusion. I should be extremely pleas'd, if you would give yourself the Trouble of seeing it acted To-morrow Night. Come but behind the Scenes, and we will place you in some Corner, where you shall be invisible to the Audience. Dear Sir, let me prevail upon you to come. I like your Preface; there is a very decent Scorn, and a mettled Contempt of the Town, in it. You have hinder'd me from going to Church this Morning, and I have tir'd your Patience, to be reveng'd of you. I am, Sir, with the utmost Regard and Sincerity,

Your most faithful,

and most obedient Servant,

B. BOOTH.

Richard the Third had the same Fate with the other alter'd Plays.

LETTER LIII.

From Mr. BOOTH, To AARON HILL, Esq;

S I R,

Charles-str. June 19. 1732.

WERE I not well assur'd, that Mr. Hill is the best-natur'd Gentleman living, I should not expect a favourable Answer to the Request I now make to him in behalf of Mr. *V——r*.

I know you have sufficient Reason not to be pleas'd with the Taste of the Town, which is, as it always was, and as it ever will be.—Mr. *Betterton* observ'd to me many Years ago, that *Don Carlos* succeeded much better than either *Venice Preserv'd* or the *Orphan*, and was infinitely more applauded and follow'd for many Years.—We know what Reception *Paradise Lost* met with in the Author's Life-time.—In short, *Rome* and *Athens* were full as partial, or rather heedless, in observing the Merit of living Authors, as *London*.—In the former City, *Fannius* had more Hearers than *Horace*.—In the latter City, *Euripides*, so justly admir'd by all Posterity, could not stand the Ridicule of *Aristophanes*, but chose to die in voluntary Banishment, to avoid the Flouts of the People; and we may conclude, that *Sophocles* himself escap'd the Burlesque of that Buffoon Comic (for such he was, notwithstanding his Merit in other Respects), only because he was a Man of Quality and Fortune.—So that, upon the Whole, I may venture to affirm, that Posterity only will do Justice to Mr. Hill, who was ever above the low Artifice of forming Cabals to support his Reputation.—Mr. *Addison* was so sensible of this Truth, that he took *whole Years* to bespeak and court Friends, in order to secure the Success of *Cato*.—And is it not thus with Preferments in general, both civil and ecclesiastical? Do not the Meritorious fail, while the industrious *Levée-Haunter* runs away with the Prize?

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I take the Liberty of saying thus much to you upon this Subject, because I have been told, you are determin'd to write no more for the Stage: I confess, I would a little soften that Resolution, if I could, in regard to Mr. V——r, and hope to prevail upon you to touch up his Tragedy, and make it fit for the Stage: And when I assure you, that your Assistance in this Affair may be a Means to make him easy, and happy in his Circumstances, I flatter myself, that your generous Disposition will need no other Motive to engage you in so good an Office—I am, dear Sir, with much Respect and Sincerity,

*Your most obedient
humble Servant,
B. BOOTH.*

L E T T E R L I V.

From Mr. BOOTH, To AARON HILL, Esq;

S I R,

Charles-str. Dec. 24. 1732.

I AM every way oblig'd to you, and shall ever acknowledge your Favours.

As to the Affairs of the Playhouse, Half a Dozen such Farces, as *The Devil in the Wine-Cellar*, and one Pantomime, would restore *Drury-Lane*—But where shall we find them? I long to talk with you on this Subject, and upon another of much greater Consequence to me, I mean my Health. I have not forgot the Drops you brought me, but I durst not take them at that Time, because I dreaded the Colic, which has now left me.—You are sensible, Sir, to what little Purpose it is to talk of Jaundices, over-heated Blood, Obstructions, &c. unless it be with the Unhappy, who have felt those Distempers.—Till I was sick myself, I had as confus'd a Notion of the Disorders occasion'd by a Fever, as the *Deaf* have of *Sounds*, or the *Blind* of *Colours*.

I know Mr. V—*r* *fancies*, I could *act*, if I pleas'd ; but he is mistaken—at least he thinks, I could *speake* a *Prologue* ; but he is mistaken in *that* too.—I have often told him, I am not able—and that I am so unhappy, at this Time, is a double Affliction to me ; because Mr. *Hill* seems to *wish* I would do it, in so engaging a Manner, that all Excuses, but that of Incapacity, would be unpardonable.

I had answer'd yours sooner, had I not been prevented from writing by this open, warm Weather, which is too apt to discompose me. A hard Frost agrees best with me.

I have a thousand Things to say to you. You will pardon me, if I flatter myself with the Hopes of seeing you shortly. I am, Sir, with utmost Respect and Sincerity,

Your most obliged,

and most humble Servant,

B. BOOTH.

P. S. I could be lavish in the Praises of your Tragedy.—If it meet not with deserv'd Success, we must hereafter regale our Audiences, as the Ghost in the *Libertine* does *Don John*, and his Companions, with the Liquor they most delight in.

L E T-

LETTER LV.

From Mr. WILKS, To AARON HILL, Esq;

S I R,

Feb. 25. 1730.

FROM the Observations you have been pleas'd to make of the Conduct, Sentiments, and Diction, of *Eurydice*; permit me to say, that, without Exception, I think you the best Judge of Dramatic Performance, in all its Branches, I have ever known. It were to be wish'd, that every Spectator had your Penetration, and could so justly distinguish the different Passions, and the Manner of working 'em.—No Actor, then, could hope for a favourable Reception, but from his Endeavours, upon all Occasions, to copy Nature: But, alas! the Taste, in general, is so deprav'd, that there is little or no Applause to be gain'd, in Tragedy, but at the Expence of *Lungs*. I am, therefore, the less concern'd, that (by the Course of Years) I have Reason to think myself so near my *Exit*. I should be proud, however; of an Opportunity to tell you how much I am,

S I R,

Your Admirer,

and obliged humble Servant,

R. WILKS.

LETTER LVI.

From Mr. WILKS, To AARON HILL, Esq;

S I R,

Bow-str. Sept. 24. 1731.

I HAVE read your Play with vast Pleasure, and Mr. *Cibber* highly approves of it; but, if *Athelwold* be the Part you design for me, I have too much Reason to fear, that 'tis next to impossible, at my Time of Day, to do it common Justice; and if I decline it, from a thorough Conviction of my own

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Insufficiency (which is truly the Case), I am sure, I may depend upon your Justice, and Good-nature, to excuse me.

I should be very sorry, after some little Success in my Business, to run the Hazard of falling under your Censure, by a very weak Performance of so capital a Part, which requires not only more Youth and Vigour, than I am Master of; but all the Requisites, that are necessary to form a complete Actor.

If you will be pleas'd to let me know, in what Manner you design to cast it, I will order the Parts to be writ out immediately, that it may be ready for acting, about the Time you mention. I am,

S I R,

*Your most obliged, and
most obedient humble Servant,*

R. WILKS.

LETTER LVII.

From Mr. WILKS, To AARON HILL, Esq;

S I R,

Bow-str. Oct. 10. 1731.

IF I said any thing about the Part of *Athelwold*, that amounted to a Promise, it was from the strong Desire which I had to appear in a Play, so highly, and so deservedly recommended; but, to my greater Mortification, I find, that the Affair of Tragedy (at least for any Continuance) is over with me: I may, perhaps, rub thro' my Parts in Comedy; but daily Experience teaches me, that it is absolutely out of my Power to support the Weight of such a Character as *Athelwold*, during the Run of a new Play, that, I am persuaded, must make its Way, in spite of Prejudice.

If any-body should make me the Compliment of asking, why I did not appear in the Part of *Athelwold*, I shall deal frankly with him, as I have done with you,

you, and tell him the true Reason; and my Sentiments of the Play will be better justify'd, by the Manner in which I speak of it every-where.

You are so obliging to ask me (in case the Play were to come on without me), Who else will be capable of supporting the Character of *Athelwold*?—Mr. *Mills*, with your Instructions, I am sure, will do it well; and he must be a wretched Actor, indeed, who is not qualify'd to enter into the Beauties of the most difficult Part, by the Assistance, which you are able to give him: And whoever has the Pleasure of conversing with Mr. *Hill*, will be fully convinc'd of this Truth. I am,

S I R,

Your most obliged,

and obedient humble Servant,

R. WILKS.

P. S. I am far from having chang'd my Opinion, as to the Merits of the Play; and I heartily wish, it were as much in my Power, as it is in my Inclination, to act conformably to your Sentiments, in every thing.

L E T-

LETTER LVIII.

From Dr. BLINMAN, To AARON HILL, Esq;

S I R,

May 21. 1736.

I Should be glad of the Honour of renewing our Acquaintance, having a very great Esteem for you: I brought you once a Gold * Medal, from the late great Empress of *Russia*. So if you please to appoint any Place, and direct to Doctor *Blinman*, at Mr. *Williams's*, over-against *White's* Chocolate-house, *St. James's*, I shall be ready to meet you; who am, with all Respect,

Your most obedient

humble Servant,

J. BLINMAN.

* The Medal, above-mention'd, was a Compliment from the *Czarina*, Consort of the great *Peter Alexiowitz* (by his own Order), to *Aaron Hill*, Esq; for a Poem, call'd *The Northern Star*, which he wrote in Justice to that truly Great Monarch about the Year 1718. and which had reach'd his Eye and Regard, by means of some foreign Translation.



